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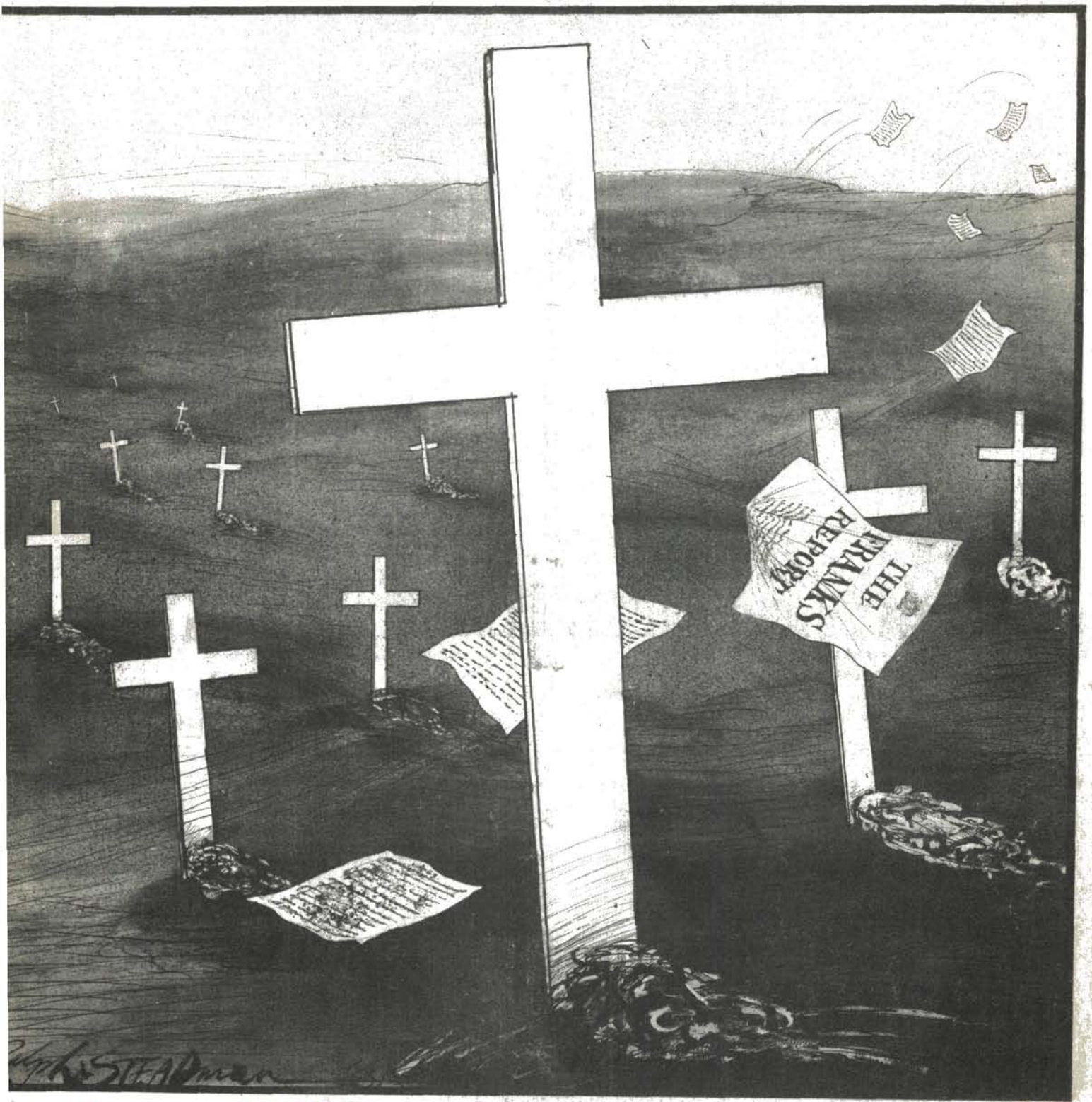

Women of Shibokusa: the Pakenham award essay

END replies to Zhukov • Christopher Hill's Milton

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New Statesman

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Frankly on the Falklands

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Peace women of Shibokusa

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New Statesman Vol 105 No 2705 21 January 1983

Nothing has been solved

LORD FRANKS' REPORT is part of a political tradition as old as time. After a catastrophe or national humiliation a process is set in train to find the necessary number of scapegoats at the level required to restore confidence. Lord Franks and the Privy Councillors who served on his committee are all integrated members of the existing political establishment. It was flying in the face of all experience to suppose that the report when it emerged would do any serious political damage to that establishment.

Even so, given the nature and extent of the Falklands episode, the scapegoat appears at a surprisingly low level, and is institutional rather than personal (the Joint Intelligence Committee, for example, rather than Sir John Nott). And the final deliberate judgment that the Committee could not attach 'any criticism or blame' to the government for the invasion is a ludicrous concluding statement for a report filled with evidence of misjudgments and errors of omission and commission. The Franks Committee would have known that such a sentence would lead to headlines like 'Thatcher exonerated' and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that such was its purpose.

But now that the shooting and the shouting have stopped, one awful fact is that no-one is an inch closer to a sensible solution to what remains 'the Falklands problem'. No amount of patriotic fervour can alter the fact that the Falklands are not by themselves an economically (or for that matter even socially) viable colony. The non-military, non-official population is ageing and shrinking. Whatever constituted the 'Falklands way of life' has now gone for ever, with the islands turned into a fortress in the South Atlantic and all activity dominated by the garrison.

There have only ever been two routes down which the Falklands could go. As Lord Shackleton showed clearly in his report, anything like self-sustaining economic development for the islands required closer links with the mainland. Serious long-term investment would not happen in the face of continuing political uncertainty. So one route required political negotiations with the Argentine. The only other route was permanent and massive subsidy from the British taxpayer. Nothing has changed that reality.

The correct policy in the past would have been to seek seriously a formula that satisfied the largely symbolic aspirations of Argentina to recover some part of sovereignty over the islands, while preserving British administration and institutions there for a century or more. To accept symbols (for example like the joint flying of flags) in order to avoid the threat of permanent armed hostility and to secure some viable economic future must be a pragmatic solution acceptable to any rational British government and it should still be the aim of any post-Thatcher administration. □

Mistaken analysis

TO GIVE THE Metropolitan Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions their due, they have moved with commendable speed over the shooting of Stephen Waldorf. Since criminal prosecutions of police officers are now under way, it would be wrong to comment on the details of the incident. But three comments about matters of general public interest should be made.

First, in the coverage of the incident by the media and in the written statement issued by the police last weekend, much was made of the fact that 'there has been a tragic case of mistaken identity'. The implication of that statement is that, if there had not been a case of mistaken identity – if the 'right' man as opposed to the 'wrong' man had been shot – an entirely different set of value judgments would have applied. This is quite unacceptable. If what happened last week was wrong, it was wrong whether or not Mr Waldorf or Mr Martin was in the car in question.

Second, the incident is further conclusive evidence – if any were needed – that there must be a major reform of the system of police accountability in London. The growing practice of issuing police with firearms and the establishment of special police units have taken place in complete isolation from any public comment. Such isolation can only encourage police officers to be a law unto themselves. The present theory is that the Metropolitan Police are answerable to the Home Secretary. The clear evidence of a whole series of recent incidents is that over the overwhelming range of its activity, it is in practice answerable only to itself. Further, it is clear that both managerial and operational control within the Met is seriously defective. A system in which the Home Secretary is wheeled on after things have gone wrong is politically unacceptable. Some new democratically responsible police authority for London is now essential.

Finally, the cumulative evidence of the increasing 'militarisation' of the police in London is now overwhelming. In other parts of the country there have been policing initiatives, centred on the social context in which the police have to operate. In London, the emphasis has been on increasing the capacity of the police to establish their authority on the streets – by force if necessary. It is a trend that must be reversed, if the claim that British policing is qualitatively better than that in many other countries is to have any further semblance of credibility. □

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Falklands: How Britain missed the boats

ALTHOUGH Lord Franks's report deals with one monumental failure of judgment by the Cabinet Office's Joint Intelligence Organisation, it sidesteps many other intelligence failures during the period before Argentina's invasion of the Falklands.

Chief among them was the failure of the Assessments Staff to read Argentinian newspaper reports and public comments, which reliably predicted what would happen and were couched in explicitly warlike terms – unlike the words used in previous moments of tension over the islands. One former member of the Joint Intelligence Staff, Air Commodore Brian Frow, calls the Franks report a 'whitewash'. He says: 'It's ridiculous to say that the indicators were not there and were not being read.'

Air Commodore Frow himself read the indicators while heading the London-based Falkland Islands Office. In September 1981, he held a press conference to announce that an Argentine invasion was now, for the first time, quite certain if negotiations failed.

In October 1981 the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) increased its priority for intelligence on Argentina. This message was passed to GCHQ, the Secret Intelligence Service and the Defence Intelligence Staff. Nothing was done. Franks doesn't say why.

He does say that extra intelligence resources might not have helped to predict Argentina's intentions. Predicting intentions is indeed tricky (although the Argentine newspaper reports made it easier); but monitoring actual military deployment is comparatively simple and easy to arrange through satellite reconnaissance and signals intelligence. Critical days of warning could certainly have been provided.

Franks also says that warning could have been given if the British defence attaché could have provided 'direct coverage of military movements in Argentina'. Allegedly, he didn't – a claim dismissed by former intelligence staff as 'ridiculous'.

The Franks report adds that it would still have been 'difficult to evaluate such information because of the absence of knowledge about the normal pattern of Argentine military activity.' Yet the report then says that 'there was no intelligence, from American sources or otherwise, to show that the force at sea before the invasion was intended other than for the normal naval exercises'. How Britain could know nothing about 'normal pattern' of activity and yet recognise 'normal exercises' is not explained.

Similar incongruities abound in the report. Franks says that 'no satellite photography was available on the disposition of the Argentine forces'. However, according to Air Commodore Frow, maritime forces 'around the globe' are under continuous scrutiny, but the usual means of satellite reconnaissance of the sea is radar, infra-red scanning or signals intelligence – not 'photography'. It is, in fact, inconceivable that information was not available from the rings of radio direction-finding stations which surround each ocean.

In reply to claims that Argentine intentions might have been deduced from the sudden movement of an acknowledged $500 million of Argentine funds out of London in the 'period running up to the invasion', Franks argues that the Bank of England would not normally receive reports of such an outflow until weeks later. He totally fails to mention the existence of the Economic Intelligence Organisation and Committee (see *NS* 19 Nov 1982), which does for financial intelligence what JIC does for foreign and diplomatic information.

Secret intelligence on the movement of money is easily available from GCHQ's intercepts on all the normal commercial communications channels in and out of Britain. The Economic Intelligence staff could have obtained the information in time – if they had been asked. A former director of Economic Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence, Edward Radice, said this week that such operations had been successfully mounted to follow Rhodesian finances and Biafran funds in the late 1960s, 'once we had a political direction'.

This question of political direction lies at the heart of the intelligence failure. Franks's guilty parties – the Joint Intelligence Committee and its subordinate groups – consistently misinterpreted information, and missed a great deal more through lack of interest. JIC has, for the moment, a Foreign Office chairman, and its Current Intelligence Groups (CIGs) are drawn largely from Foreign Office and MoD staff with experience in the geographical region. Both the JIC and the CIGs often bias their work to the political evaluations and priorities of either their parent departments or the government as a whole.

That happened with intelligence on the Falklands time and time again. SIS's agents and informants in the Argentine foreign and defence ministries were few in number, and all seem to have told their intelligence case-officers what the British government cared to hear. That message was that the junta really did not mean business.

For that reason, priorities for GCHQ and other agencies to intercept signals or gather data were not increased. So, when an assistant rushed into John Nott's office late on 31 March with the decrypt that revealed the time and date of the invasion of Port Stanley, it was far too late.

Duncan Campbell

Sewers may collapse if water strike goes ahead

DOUBLE-DECKER buses may fall through the streets and into the sewers if next week's water strike goes ahead. This is not some lurid prediction of the tabloid press but the more measured view of the House of Lords select committee on science and technology, whose report on the water industry was published last month.

The committee argued that the government was leaving the sewerage renewal programme £100 million a year short of capital investment. If the programme was not speeded up, hydraulic overload was increasingly likely, leading to the weakening of external support for sewer pipes and, eventually, massive ground collapses.

One of the teams that will be on strike from next Monday deals with repair equipment, so the possibility of fixing old sewers will be reduced. The threat of ground collapse is only one of many potential horrors ahead, including polluted rivers, water rationing and blocked drains.

The apparent insouciance with which the government has approached the prospect of a national strike is typical of its attitude to the water industry. The National Water Council has repeatedly criticised lack of capital funding, necessary to locate leaks (estimated by some at 30 per cent of all water supplied), mend drains and renovate sewers. Capital funding has fallen by half in real terms over the past ten years.

The House of Lords committee was especially critical of 'the relaxed attitude of the Department of the Environment, which accords badly with the collapse data'. Of the estimated 210,000 km of sewers in Britain, about 15 per cent are more than 100 years old; in Manchester, it is 80 per cent.

Oddly enough, many water authorities do not even know where their sewers are. The Anglian Water Authority, for instance, knows the whereabouts of only 8 per cent of its 22,000 km of sewers.

According to Eddie Newall, leader of 30,000 water workers, the threat of an all-out strike from next Monday cannot now be lifted without the intervention of environment secretary Tom King. Newall claims that the National Water Council, which negotiates on behalf of the 10 water authorities in England and Wales, had planned to raise its 4 per cent offer to 6 per cent last November, but the government vetoed the increase. During a debate on the Water Bill (which abolishes the National Water Council), Denis Howell MP asked King three times if he would deny this story; King refused.

But it is not certain that even an offer of 6 per cent would satisfy the unions, who have been insisting for over a year that their position in the earnings league table should be raised to the upper quartile of male manual workers' earnings.

This claim was not resolved in

Burst water mains: the shape of things to come?

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last year's negotiations. Further discussions were held in the summer, when the employers said that they would consider granting it in return for large concessions from the unions. These included, at various times during the three meetings, flexible rostering, a later settlement date, a no-strike clause, payment by credit transfer and a ban on all strikes unless they were authorised by a strike ballot. The employers abandoned these discussions in August, as the next pay round neared.

The National Water Council has now formally asked for binding arbitration to settle the dispute. The conciliation service ACAS, which had separate talks with the two sides this week, has so far refused to accept this request since by practice and statute it cannot arbitrate without the consent of both sides. The GMBU, the largest union involved, will not accept arbitration without 'real negotiations.' It claims that the government has in any case decided unilaterally to tear up the industry's agreement from next year by abolishing the National Water Council this September. The government favours regional pay negotiations in future.

Patrick Wintour

When police can shoot

LAST WEEK'S shooting of Stephen Waldorf has raised concern about the police's use of guns. Interestingly enough, the massive (and confidential) Metropolitan Police *Instruction Book*, which deals with everything from abduction to zebra crossings, contains not one word about the use of firearms by police officers. But on Monday Willie Whitelaw placed in the House of Commons library a copy of the *Metropolitan Police Rules on the Issue and Use of Firearms*. Since most of our readers do not have access to the Commons library, we are printing the main sections below:

Use

Every officer to whom a weapon is issued must be strictly warned that it is to be used only in cases of absolute necessity; e.g. if he, or the person he is protecting, is attacked by a person with a firearm or other deadly weapon and he cannot otherwise reasonably protect himself or give protection, he may resort to a firearm as a means of defence.

In planned operations where the issue of firearms is deemed necessary, the use of such weapons will be strictly controlled by the supervising officer in charge of that operation.

When a firearm is fired by an officer other than during an accepted D.11 firearms course, whether or not any person has been shot, a Detective Chief Inspector will attend the scene of the incident. He will thoroughly investigate the matter and make full use of the technical support services.

Issue of weapons – general principles

Weapons must only be issued to officers who are able to give a valid and satisfactory reason for so requiring them and who are currently authorised. Officers will be required to produce their warrant cards together with their firearms authorisation card on each occasion a firearm is issued.

Firearms will only be issued under the direct and personal supervision of an officer not below the rank of Inspector save in exceptional circumstances when such an officer is not available. In such cases the station officer, if of Sergeant rank, will be responsible and steps to obtain covering authority are to be taken immediately. In each case the Ch. Supt i/c Division or Branch is to be informed as soon as practicable.

Where officers are employed regularly on armed protection duties (i.e. fixed protection posts), Chief Superintendents may issue local directions regarding issue. □

Balcombe Street siege

MISCELLANY

Thoroughly modern

Right-wing 'historian' David Irving has been trying to copy the Reaganites' 'direct mail' techniques by sending out what he describes as 'computerised mailings'. Last year he wrote to sundry nationalist, antisemitic and rightist organisations to say that, by 'using modern methods', his Focus Policy Group had 'obtained a key computerised listing of all chairmen and secretaries as well as many activists of the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) – 1,600 current personal names and addresses!' He added that FCS members 'are politically conscious men and women who will form British opinion and policies over the next decade'. Irving wrote that any 'national-minded' organisation could exploit his FCS mailing list for 'an agreed fee'. But what were these 'modern methods' by which he obtained the list? 'We use money,' Irving told us this week. 'We buy mailing lists. A very high official of FCS approached us under an assumed name. He identified himself eventually with his passport. We paid him a three figure sum. It was all in soiled banknotes.'

No news like old news

Question: What links Peter Jay and Sir James Goldsmith?

Answer: Jay's breakfast telly channel, TV-AM, is relying for its news background information on the 'cuttings' library it has bought from Sir James's defunct *Now!* magazine. For some years Jay has made a meal of his ideas about the need for a new kind of 'in depth' news and current affairs on television. But his journalists may be floundering a bit if they are forced to rely on the library from *Now!* Goldsmith's incompetent venture into journalism closed down nearly two years ago (after only 18 months of existence), so the cuttings will be a trifle out of date.

Off the map

Are capitalist enterprises keen on profits? Not always, apparently. In 1977, the fusty and loss-making map shop of Stanford's, in London, chose Lindianna Carter to be its new manager. She abolished the hierarchy of assistants, introduced flexitime and put Paul Hobbs in charge of building up a paperback section. The shop became a favourite haunt of travel connoisseurs and discriminating readers. It also began to make profits. This startling news reached the ears of Stanford's owners, George Philip & Sons Ltd, who have offices above the shop. They ventured downstairs and set about reclaiming 'management's right to manage'. In the process they lost Lindianna Carter as manager, sacked Paul Hobbs (shop steward for ACTSS) and then sacked all the staff who walked out in sympathy with him. To the dismay of management, who have always refused to recognise the union, the staff have maintained a very effective picket. Management have now finally agreed to resume talks at ACAS next week. But there is a new mystery; George Philip & Son Ltd has transferred all the property and equipment of its eight subsidiaries (including Stanford's) to a separate company. The firm says that it did so to avoid a takeover by an asset-stripper; the shop's staff are not so sure.

Anything she can do . . .

According to recent reports, our own dear Prime Minister can stop a penguin at fifty paces with one look from those laser-beam eyes. But she still has some way to go before she equals the powers of President J. R. Jayawardene of Sri Lanka. Opening an exhibition a couple of weeks ago, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, R. Premadasa, said that a big new archaeological find 'was not surprising', since 'the present government, headed by President J. R. Jayawardene, is a just and righteous government. That is why we have been able to make this valuable archaeological find from the Raja rata.' In the matter of loyal press coverage, too, the Sri Lankans can teach our own tabloids a trick or two. Earlier this month an article on the children's page of the Ceylon *Sunday Observer* said that 'the young ones of today should emulate this great man' (President J. R. Jayawardene). Why? Because he 'is an embodiment of virtue and morality and possesses qualities and traits worth emulating. Intellectual curiosity and capacity, search for new knowledge, well-balanced education excelling in studies, sports, drama and elocution, importance of team work, acceptance of victory and defeat alike, thoroughness in everything, religious education, honesty, fearlessness, courage, steadfastness and determination, simplicity in living, and concern for others, even for the lowliest, patriotism and national consciousness and emulation of great men in contemporary history'. Clearly not a man to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

Priced into a job

Members of the Local Government Audit Commission for England and Wales, whose names were announced by the environment secretary last week, might examine the beams in their own eyes before they investigate 'extravagant spending' by local councils. For working one day a month the members will receive £1,350 p.a. – equivalent to a full-time annual salary of £29,250. The Commission's chairman will be paid £7,550 for working one day a week – equivalent to a salary of £37,750. And the Controller of Audit will be paid a lip-smacking £60,000 a year. By way of comparison, one might mention that the head of the civil service, Sir Robert Armstrong, currently receives only £42,000 and permanent secretaries get a derisory £37,750.

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War minister scoffs at CND

EARLER this month a list of editors and political correspondents of major newspapers and broadcasting stations in the West Country was drawn up by Mr Colin Cross in the Central Office of Information's regional headquarters in Bristol. Those lucky enough to be on the list were invited to private lunches with Mr Peter Blaker, the armed forces minister.

'I hope to explain to you government thinking on nuclear policy,' Mr Blaker wrote in his letter of invitation, 'and to seek your views on the state of the debate in your area.' He added: 'I hope that my lunch might go some way to redress the balance and be a useful means of testing the temperature locally on nuclear policy issues.'

One of the lunches was held at the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth on Monday this week. It was a flop. The editor of one Plymouth paper, the *Sunday Independent*, refused to go. A journalist on the *Devon Mid-Week Advertiser* staged a walk-out. Local TV and radio coverage was hostile, focusing on the minister's refusal to debate in public rather than consult in private. Another lunch, due to be held in Bristol this Friday (21 January), is unlikely to be any more successful for the minister.

These lunches follow a similar exercise held in Leeds last November, one day before CND's annual conference opened in Sheffield. Peter Blaker described his Leeds lunch as 'mutually advantageous as well as enjoyable'. But one journalist who was present remembers it differently. Blaker's performance was lacklustre, and he surprised everyone by introducing Mr Ken Aldred, the British Atlantic Committee's 'Director of Regional Information Services'. The government-funded BAC, supposedly an all-party charity, established its Regional Information Service last year expressly to counter the growth of CND, following pressure from local Conservative organisatons.

Why has Peter Blaker now chosen the West Country for the second leg of his gastronomic attack on CND? The MoD refuse to confirm or deny that he's on a systematic tour of the country, but, if he is, the West would be a good place to start. CND is probably stronger there than anywhere else in England. Exeter CND alone has over 2,000 members.

That kind of support could have considerable effect in a general election, especially as many Tory MPs in the area can't be relied on to put over the government line on defence. Both Plymouth's Tory MPs are defence dissidents: Alan Clark takes a Powellite view of American bases and American Trident missiles, while Janet Fookes is a

wet who looked as if she might leave the party last year.

Chris Horrie

Suicide mystery sparks protest

ANGER IS mounting in Hackney, east London, after the bizarre suicide of Colin Roach at Stoke Newington police station on 12 January. A meeting called by the family and Hackney Black People's Association, attended by over 100 local people, has demanded an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Colin's death.

A march to Stoke Newington police station this Saturday has also been planned. Already, 25 people have been arrested and two policemen injured in two demonstrations about the death in the past week. Local people clearly doubt official police explanations of the death. Apparently, Colin Roach, a 21-year-old black man, walked into the foyer of Stoke Newington police station and shot himself through the mouth with a single-barrelled sawn-off shotgun. The police say: 'Nobody actually saw it happen, only the shotgun was heard.'

There is also anger at the way the Roach family has been treated. According to the family's solicitor Gareth Pierce, who was present at the police station soon after the death, 'they were not treated like human beings'. Colin's father was held and questioned for three hours before being informed of his son's death and the next morning the family were not allowed to see the body, and were given no further information about their son's death.

Stoke Newington police station has a controversial past. A series of incidents in recent years has strengthened the belief that there is a large racist element in the local force. In May 1982, after a six-year civil action, a black couple were awarded £51,000 damages for an assault on them by several Stoke Newington police officers.

Melissa Benn

Still no trial for Welsh republicans

AS THREE of the defendants in the Welsh republicans conspiracy case enter their ninth month in jail, their families and supporters are increasingly concerned about the conditions in which they are being kept.

Five men are in Cardiff prison awaiting trial while a woman and two men are out on bail. All have been committed for trial at Crown Court charged with conspiring together 'with persons unknown' to destroy or damage property in Wales and England over a 27-month period. They are aged between 22 and 30 and were members of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement, which has virtually collapsed since the arrests.

The defendants' families and the Welsh Political Prisoners Defence Committee have been drawing attention to the long time for which the men have been held. After the committal, an application for bail to a judge in chambers was refused – despite the fact that one of the people now on bail faces similar charges to three of the prisoners.

A letter to Dafydd Wigley MP from one of the defendants, Dafydd Ladd, describes the conditions in which the five are being held. Forty-four men are housed in 16 cells in their wing. In these cells – measuring roughly 12 feet by seven – the prisoners are locked up for more than 20 hours a day. Ladd also complains about sanitary conditions, saying that prisoners are not allowed to disinfect their slop-out bowls or cells.

Remand prisoners are not allowed to work and are financially dependent on family and friends for money to buy things like toothpaste and shampoo, which are not provided. There is no opportunity for them to attend classes and the only place where they can study is in their overcrowded cells.

Dafydd Wigley recently asked the Home Office about a discrepancy between Scottish law and English law (which covers Wales). If a prisoner on remand in Scotland is not brought to trial within 110 days, he or she must be released. Home Office minister Patrick Mayhew replied that the speed with which cases came to trial was determined by the amount of business before the courts.

'We believe the defendants are victims of political harassment,' says Lowri Morgan of the prisoners' defence committee. 'Our concern at this point is to see that as far as possible justice is done. We are also concerned about prison conditions – especially as the defendants are being kept on remand for so long.'

No date has been set for the trial, which is expected to be heard in Welsh and English in Cardiff.

James Stewart

Inquest on borstal death

NEXT FRIDAY, at Market Drayton in Shropshire, an inquest will be held into the death of 19-year-old Stephen Walmsley. Stephen was found dead in his cell at Stoke Heath Borstal, Shropshire, on 11 October last year – just six weeks before he was due to be released from his six-month sentence for robbery.

Stephen was cremated by the borstal authorities before his family had seen the body. The family, who live in the Leeds area, were informed of the funeral arrangements only when they received a letter from the borstal governor on the day of the cremation.

The borstal authorities allege that Stephen hanged himself with his overall straps while his cell-mate was out working. However, family and friends refuse to accept that Stephen would take his own life, especially since he wrote a letter just before his death in which he said that he was looking forward to seeing his friends again on his release from borstal.

In the weeks before his death Stephen twice received medical attention. In September, his family were told that he had broken his jaw in a 'shower incident'. The governor, Alexander Cruickshank, later said: 'It was an accident. He slipped in the shower'. Two weeks after the 'accident', Stephen was again taken to hospital, this time to have his appendix taken out: his family believe that this was set off by a punch or kick.

In October 1980, a leading member of the Prison Officers' Association at Stoke Heath complained to a local paper that the borstal was housing 460 people although it had facilities for only 360. Earlier the same year, a confrontation between a prison officer and an inmate led to a charge of actual bodily harm against the inmate. More recently, on 12 November last year, less than a month after Stephen Walmsley's death, an 18-year-old youth was charged with actual bodily harm and sent to a Borstal Allocation Unit at Strangeways Prison. He had tried to strangle his cell-mate, causing him to lose consciousness.

Mark Urbanowicz

Mark Urbanowicz works for INQUEST, the pressure group which investigates deaths in custody.

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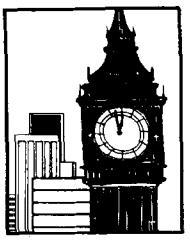

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

If only E. H. Carr had written the Franks Report

PUBLICLY, Labour MPs blame Mrs Thatcher. They think she should carry the can for the Falklands debacle. Privately, though, they blame Merlyn Rees: he should carry the can for the Franks debacle. When George Foulkes accused the Franks Committee of masterminding an establishment cover-up, Mrs Thatcher replied icily that the Labour leadership had agreed to the committee's composition, and nominated two of its members – Lord Lever and Merlyn Rees.

Nobody expected Lord Lever to guard Labour's corner over-zealously in the committee: he may have a highly intelligent mind and a capacity for sharp analysis, but he has effectively retired from politics. Merlyn Rees, on the other hand, remains an active politician.

Not that Mr Rees would have used his position on the Franks Committee to score party points: heaven forbid. Rather, should he not have required more penetrating scrutiny of the government's failures in the build-up to the Argentine invasion, and resisted the remarkable absolution of Mrs Thatcher and her ministers at the end of the report? 'The trouble with Merlyn', said one Labour MP – by no means a left-winger – a few hours after the report was published, 'is that while he's amazingly honest and sincere, he's far too easily awed by civil servants and the government machine.'

According to this line of reasoning, which is widely shared on the Labour benches, Michael Foot should have nominated someone else for the Franks Committee – someone with a greater ability to penetrate witnesses' defences and to draw more robust conclusions from their answers. Peter Archer, Labour's former Solicitor-General, was mentioned.

Maybe the presence of Peter Archer on the Franks Committee in place of Merlyn Rees would have made a difference; but I doubt it. In a curious way some Labour MPs are making exactly the same mistake about the Franks report that the government made over the Falklands. They see their task in the wake of the report as managing a crisis. By courtesy of Adam Raphael's scoop in last Sunday's *Observer*, Labour MPs had 48 hours warning that Lord Franks would vindicate Mrs Thatcher, just as ministers had 48 hours warning that Argentina would invade the Falklands. And just as ministers then tried to extract themselves from an unforeseen blow, so Labour now is trying to do the same following Franks.

It is a natural extension of this style of politics to play the 'if only' game: if only John Nott had decided not to withdraw HMS Endurance from the South Atlantic, then perhaps the Argentines would not have invaded; if only someone other than Merlyn Rees had been nominated to serve on the Franks Committee, then perhaps its report would have worked out differently.

WHAT WAS WRONG with the Franks committee – just as what is wrong with most of Labour's reaction to it – was that it conceived its task too narrowly. (In the Commons on Tuesday afternoon, the only two MPs who seem to have grasped both points were that improbable couple, James Callaghan and Tony Benn.) Franks's widely-publicised conclusion – 'the invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April could not have been foreseen' – conceals not so much the inadequacies of Mrs Thatcher's ministers and officials, as the inadequacies of the Franks approach to historical analysis.

Before ploughing through their boxes of official files, the committee should have read, or re-read, E. H. Carr's *What is History**. In one of his most celebrated passages, Professor Carr asked who should shoulder the blame for this incident:

> Jones, returning from a party at which he has consumed more than his usual ration of alcohol, in a car whose brakes turn out to have been defective, at a blind corner where visibility is notoriously poor, knocks down and kills Robinson, who was crossing the road to buy cigarettes at the shop on the corner.

Had Lord Franks and his colleagues been invited to inquire into this incident, it might have found that while scrupulous observation would have detected Robinson's dangerous habit of (a) smoking and (b) crossing the road where visibility is poor, no amount of intelligence gathering could have anticipated much in advance Robinson's likelihood of crossing the road *at that time*. Franks's conclusion, following the style of his Falklands report, would presumably have been: 'The crossing of the road at 9.43pm could not have been foreseen.'

To any ordinary mortal, such a judgment, while flawless in its narrowly-conceived logic, would be ludicrous as a verdict on the whole event. The ordinary mortal would be right. And Carr proceeds to demolish exactly such a way of conducting historical analysis. But Carr then goes on to make a more profound point of central relevance to the Franks debate. *Any* event of interest has a variety of causes – some accidental, some 'rational' (i.e. foreseeable). Events, whether a road accident or a war, arise from the combination of accidental and rational causes. Anyone attempting to distil the 'real' cause of any event by concentrating on some points and discarding others is bound to reflect the value-judgments of the analyst: 'behind the search for causalities there always lies, directly or indirectly the search for values'. (Carr, quoting F. Meinecke).

As Anthony Barnett shows on the following pages, the values that underpin the Franks report derive from a set of illusions about Britain's capacity to remain a 'Great Power'. At a practical level this led the committee into chronicling the remarkable sequence of political failures over two decades to 'solve' the Falklands problem (chapter two of the report) but without linking these failures coherently to the immediate build-up to the invasion (chapters three and four): Franks does not blame the war on the Government's post-imperial fantasies, for the simple reason that he shares those fantasies.

As a result, the report allows the conscientious reader to discover how the ingredients of last spring's explosion were put, one-by-one, in their place; yet when the report concludes in acquitting ministers, all it really says is that nobody could have foreseen exactly when, and how, Argentina would light the blue touch paper.

Even on this narrow point, the report is strangely defective. It fails to answer the question: exactly how and when did the Argentines start preparing for invasion, and by what process was the final decision to go ahead taken? It may be true that the invasion did not become a *certainty* until two days before it happened, but it must have become a clear *possibility* some days earlier: politically and logistically it was not an act that the junta could have decided upon out of the blue. The vision conjured up by the Franks report is that General Galtieri woke up on 31 March, rang General Menendez, and said: 'Look, I've had an idea about this whole Malvinas business. Let's invade. How about the day after tomorrow?'

It is, of course, an absurd proposition. But any other account of what was happening in Buenos Aires would undermine Franks's conclusion that Mrs Thatcher's government was not to blame.

Next week, when MPs debate the Franks report, they will doubtlessly (and properly) pick over its detailed points. We can only hope that some MPs – and not just Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell – will point to its more fundamental flaws. Those flaws do not just reflect the illusions of the committee, but the illusions of most politicians, too. □

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To Be Absolutely Franks . . .

Anthony Barnett asks the questions about the 'need' for the Falklands war which the Franks committee failed to ask; and he accounts for that failure by looking at Franks's own view of Britain's world role

LADY BROCKLEHURST: If I had been wrecked on an island, I think it is highly probable that *I* should have lied when I came back. Weren't there any servants with them?

LORD BROCKLEHURST: Crichton the butler. Why Mother you are not going to –

LADY BROCKLEHURST: Yes I am George, watch whether Crichton begins any of his answers to my questions with "The fact is," because that is always the beginning of a lie.

(J. M. Barrie, *The Admirable Crichton*)

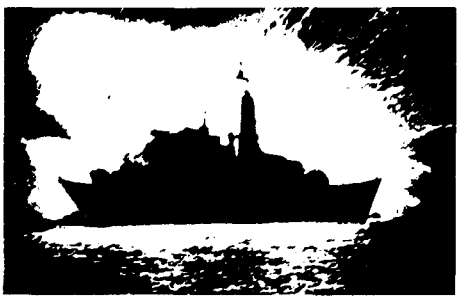
IT WAS WIDELY THOUGHT that the Franks Report would be an investigation into the causes of the Falklands War, a war that is rightly held to have been unnecessary. Here, at last, we were to be given an account of what went wrong, with some stringent conclusions about how to prevent any recurrence. It would be one of those reports for which the British fancy themselves and in which they take inordinate pride. Americans may mount endless public investigations, the French indulge in scandals, but the British will produce – as it were out of the hat of disaster – a report by a committee that has met in secret that will be accepted as authoritative – because it is factual, unpartisan and true.

How very disappointing, then, that the blame which is made to stick by the Franks Report seems as harmless as bluetack. It peels off without resistance to leave the surface to which it was applied virtually unblemished. The war was unfortunate, but fundamentally nothing serious went wrong. It was just one of those things.

Indeed the Franks Report serves as a justification of the war. Insofar as it calls for some surgery in the machinery of government, it merely demands plastic surgery in the way we are governed.

Its terms of reference, which refer to the way the government discharged its responsibilities towards the Falklands, seem to ask why there was a needless war in the South Atlantic. Implicitly, however, the Commission has asked why it *came to be necessary* to fight for the Falklands. It presumes the rightfulness of British sovereignty – the key issue at question in the conflict itself.

In its concluding chapter the Report asks 'Could the present Government have prevented the invasion?,' and then takes the question back over a period of 17 years to 1965. It says: 'There is no simple answer to it.' This is rubbish, especially over such a period of time. There is an obvious answer: Yes, successive Governments could easily have prevented the invasion by ceding some



part of formal sovereignty over the Falklands to Argentina.

This is the crucial issue. We do not need a committee of 'The Great and the Good,' six wise men or even seven dwarfs to tell us that is so. But it seems that we *do* need such a committee – I mean of six wise men, they must be given all the respect they are due – to confuse us on this central question. In its conclusion the Report states that the British government 'had to act within the constraints imposed by the wishes of the Falkland Islanders.' It did not 'have' to do so in any passive way. The full paragraph from the Report (No. 338) is reproduced below; as a piece of drafting it is remarkably unclear.

Over the page, the Report's first Annex states: 'Ministers and officials made clear to Argentina on numerous occasions that the wishes of the Falkland Islanders were paramount.' But this is not what is stated in paragraph 338. After all, if the Islanders' wishes were 'paramount,' these would hardly have been a 'constraint' for they would have been policy itself. Furthermore, as we shall see, there were a number of occasions over the years when Ministers were careful *not* to make the wishes of the Islanders the 'paramount' dictate of policy, some of which the Report itself cites. The Commission's account thus seems to be internally contradictory on the major and decisive issue of substance with which the war was concerned.

Before asking why this should be, what does the Report tell us about past party policies?

IN AUGUST 1968 the Wilson government drew up a Memorandum for public agreement with Argentina. It stated that the UK would recognise Argentinian sovereignty over the Islands, provided that the 'interests' of the Islanders were safeguarded and guaranteed to the satisfaction of the UK. There was no mention of the 'wishes' of the Islanders themselves. (It thus seems that by the time they got to page 89 the Franks Committee had forgotten what they reported on page 6.) That government also planned to make clear when it released the Memorandum that the transfer of sovereignty would take place only when it was 'acceptable' to the Islanders. But again this is quite different from their 'wishes.' They might 'wish' the Islands to remain British, but given the fact of the UK's commitment to transfer sovereignty, they would have had to ensure 'acceptable' terms. But, 'critical' public and press reaction made the Government retreat from its plan. The Falklands were not worth a fuss, it seemed.

However, economic relations between the Islands and Argentina were strengthened, by the Heath government in particular. It formulated the idea of a *condominium* with Argentina, perhaps linked to joint development in the area but presumably not 'wished' by the Islanders either. But then Heath was ejected from office.

When Wilson returned, a further approach was made by the British to extend joint development. Whereupon Vignes, the then Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs, suggested that this should be linked to 'a transfer of sovereignty followed by a simultaneous leaseback for a period of years.' Thus the leaseback proposal – in which nominal sovereignty would become Argentina's while the *actual* government of the Islands and their population would remain British – was originally proposed by Argentina itself. The Wilson government turned this down. But the Report does not tell us why.

Naturally, the rebuff seems to have caused extreme resentment on Argentina's part, which was exacerbated by the dispatch of Lord Shackleton's team to investigate the development potential of the Islands. Actually, Shackleton concluded that an agreement with Argentina over sovereignty was

> 338. The British Government, on the other hand, had to act within the constraints imposed by the wishes of the Falkland Islanders, which had a moral force of their own as well as the political support of an influential body of Parliamentary opinion; and also by strategic and military priorities which reflected national defence and economic policies: Britain's room for policy manoeuvre was limited.

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an essential pre-condition to any satisfactory and lasting improvement on the Islands. However, the Franks Report does not tell us this.

But by July 1977, even the Callaghan administration had decided that 'substantive negotiations were necessary' and concluded that it 'would be forced back in the end on some variation of a leaseback solution linked with a programme of joint economic development.' Yet when Ted Rowlands went to New York to negotiate on that government's behalf in December 1977, he 'was able to avoid proposing leaseback.' One can almost hear the Franks Committee breathe a collective sigh of relief.

When Thatcher replaced Callaghan, Nicholas Ridley was sent out to the Islands. He found that there was 'little enthusiasm for the idea of a leaseback.' Such is the delphic truth, the teasing objectivity of the Franks Committee prose. Of course, we can be quite sure that there was no *enthusiasm*, no banners or T-shirts saying 'GIVE US LEASEBACK', however wise such sentiments might in fact have been. But what we want to know from this authoritative account is whether and on what terms the Falklanders would have found leaseback acceptable – over how many years and with what accompanying compensation? Perhaps if they had also been offered half a million pounds each they might *even* have been a little enthusiastic.

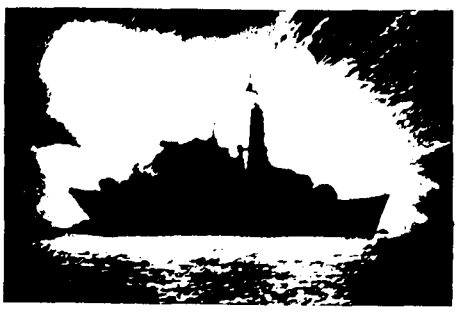
Meanwhile, the Foreign Office concluded that there had to be *substantive* negotiations, or there would be a high risk of military confrontation. And the report makes clear that from around 1980 the Thatcher government was aware at the very least that it was taking a risk. The Falklands were far more a matter of concern, if still a secondary one, than the public realised.

In November 1980 it was decided by the Defence Committee that Ridley should return again to the Falklands, 'to discover the level of support there' for a leaseback arrangement, which it had already been agreed would be the best basis for a settlement. But at this meeting, according to a later report in the *Economist* which seems to have been rather accurate (19 June 1982), Ridley was given a 'fearful mauling,' by Thatcher. She was against making any concessions to Argentina and appears to have prevented Ridley from going to the Islands with a clear mandate of government support for a sovereignty settlement. Despite this, the visit found that, although a 'substantial minority' of the Islanders opposed leaseback on the Falklands, the 'majority' remained 'undecided,' according to the Franks Report.

It does not tell us about how these proportions were arrived at. What sort of majority was it? How big was the 'substantial' opposition? Perhaps the latter just means loud, rich and influential. At any rate this evasion seems to bear out the argument made by some Islanders, that had Ridley gone with a firm mandate and generous terms he could have gained even majority endorsement in the Islands for a leaseback. Mrs Thatcher, concerned about back-bench resentment of the Zimbabwe settlement, blocked any such move, we can say almost certainly. We cannot be more certain than that, because the Franks Report just does not tell us about Thatcher's role at the crucial meeting. But we are certainly justified in thinking that the 'wishes' of the Islanders have been played with by politicians in Westminster, in particular by the Prime Minister, to further their own short-term ends.

But not only by Thatcher. For when Ridley returned he could not present the House of Commons with the Islanders' assent. Instead, Peter Shore leapt upon him to assert the 'paramouncy' of the Islanders' wishes, something that was never Labour's policy but which would henceforth bind them to Thatcher's chariot.

Even after his Parliamentary ambush, Ridley continued to press for a campaign to sell the policy of leaseback to the Islanders and to warn opinion in Britain, given the mounting risk of a military showdown. Carrington thought the effort hopeless, evidently because he could not get the Prime



Minister's support – but again the Report does not tell us anything specific on this score. Instead, while concern about a confrontation mounted it was decided to withdraw the *Endurance*. Thus the Thatcher government decided simultaneously to continue to negotiate, to concede nothing and to reduce its guard.

NOW WHY, AFTER the humiliating excesses of the Falklands War, should we have to suffer the further embarrassment of this grovelling whitewash? There are a number of different, supporting answers. At least one of them concerns the general approach to world affairs of Britain since the war. There can be few better places to look for an expression of this approach than Lord Franks's own Reith Lectures in 1954, delivered when he returned from being our Ambassador in Washington. He titled his keynote address to the nation 'Britain and the Tide of World Affairs.' It was an extended advocacy of what he observed to be the governing impulse of British political life. Although Parliament seems to be full of noisy divisions and disagreements, Franks noted that on major issues decisions were quite uncontested: the creation of NATO, the positioning of troops in Germany, the rebuilding of the 'Sterling Area,' the commitment to a nuclear programme. This consensus flowed from an accepted principle, Franks argued: 'It can be stated very simply. Britain is going to continue to be what she has been, a Great Power.' His lectures were dedicated to arguing that this is indeed the case.

He then went on to prescribe the future course for British politics. Take the Commonwealth for example. Younger readers of the *New Statesman* in 1983 will be forgiven if they think that the Commonwealth is an athletic association. For Lord Franks it has been something different. The Commonwealth, above all else, 'enables us to play in the big league with the continental powers.' Indeed, 'the basic condition for the continuing greatness of Britain is a vigorous Commonwealth.' It is a club, true, 'but never before has there been anything like it in the world.'

Franks's world view was, even in 1954, a ludicrous anachronism; and there is little evidence that it has changed since. In *The Times* the day before his Report was published, a magnificent puff was emitted. Lord Franks, its headline states, has 'an alpha treble plus mind,' with an exceptional capacity to penetrate to the facts. His Reith lectures, however, are a charivari of wishful thinking.

And something in the attitude of the present report was foreshadowed succinctly by one Franks passage in 1954:

> Little argument is needed to show the necessity of the Commonwealth to Britain's continuing greatness. It is a truth which the British people have intuitively perceived: they do not require a demonstration. What is this small island with its 50,000,000 inhabitants if it has to go it alone?

The answer, of course, is that it *is* the British people! But for Lord Franks this is not enough, such a people would have to be part of Europe or a dependency of the United States. The British people, however, according to Franks, will always,

> carry through what they believe necessary for the continuing greatness of their country.

In other words, they will work two shifts (that was in 1954) and keep down wages, or today suffer unemployment, and keep down wages, so as to ensure that the Frankses of this country, and the Thatchers, can believe themselves to represent a world power, in the 'big league.'

This is what the Falklands was about. And this is why the Report is hopelessly inadequate as an *explanation* of why something that should not have happened did take place. J. M. Barrie observed that when people answer a question with 'The fact is,' then that is the beginning of a lie. When a diplomat leans forward and says to a reporter in confidence and off-the-record 'to be absolutely frank,' then you can be sure that while what follows may not be a lie, it will always in some way be misleading. At least that is so in my experience.

So perhaps we should now coin a new phrase: 'To be absolutely Franks.' It has nothing to do with lying. It is not a form of mendacity of the sort that we 50 million tadpoles are concerned with in our mundane island. No, it is an altogether higher form of misleading. To be absolutely Franks combines utter self-assurance with complete self-deception. Each statement may be exact. Each step from one proposition to another will seem quite unimpeachable. Yet the whole thing is simply off the wall. □

Anthony Barnett is the author of Iron Britannia, *published by Allison & Busby, £2.95.*

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CONSERVATISM

Lest we remember

Tories are fond of citing tradition as the foundation of their government yet, as Raphael Samuel argues, they display neither interest in, nor knowledge of, historical change

MRS THATCHER'S CLARION CALL for a return to 'Victorian values' (made, last Sunday, on *Weekend World*) was a repetition of one of her favourite themes. Sometimes she couples such appeals with demands for a return to 'traditional' law and order; sometimes with pleas for 'old-fashioned family morality'; sometimes with the advocacy of thrift. Last Sunday she followed her appeal with an encomium on Victorian philanthropy. 'As people prospered themselves so they gave great voluntary things to the State . . . So many of the hospitals . . . were given by this great benefaction feeling that we have in Britain. Even some of the prisons . . . As our people prospered, so they used their independence and initiative to prosper others.'

Conservatives attach great importance to what they call 'traditions' and are never happier than when advocating the necessity and beneficence of maintaining them. But for all the attention they give to tradition, the Conservative Party and its leaders seem singularly cavalier in their treatment of the past, both in the inconstancy of their attachments and the promiscuous uses to which they turn them. Mrs Thatcher's reference to philanthropy (which she seems somehow to have confused with self-help) is perhaps a case in point. The praise for Victorian philanthropy comes oddly from one who, up to now, has shown very little interest in the Condition-of-England question, specifically disclaiming responsibility for its present state (if inflation falls, it is a result of government policy; if unemployment rises, it is an act of God), and who prides herself on the absence of social conscience, or what she derisorily calls 'bourgeois guilt'.

The demand for a return to 'Victorian values' is plainly a rhetorical gesture, one which consorts uneasily with the decision to license Cable TV; or with a knighthood to that purveyor of extra-marital fantasy, the editor of the *Sun*. The ambiguities of Mrs Thatcher's relationship to the idea of philanthropy become apparent if one considers her constant sniping at 'featherbedding', or her Party's tremendous current hatred of 'do-gooders'. Mr Tebbit's words, when presenting some awards to the disabled, may serve to pinpoint the uncertainties which the analogy conceals. 'I am glad to see that it is not the bleeding hearts, or the Victorian philanthropists, who are winning these awards', he said, noting with pleasure that only a single health authority had qualified for an award, as distinct from hard-nosed capitalists like Lord Weinstock, at GEC, five of whose companies have won an award to date.

The Party plainly relates uneasily to its own traditions, so much so that, at the 1981 annual conference, the mere whisper of Disraeli's name – let alone of the dread term 'one nation' – was thought tantamount to treason. Mrs Thatcher cast herself from the first as a giant-killer, speaking for the 'root-land of Tory Britain' against what one of her acolytes, Mr Howell, calls the Party 'grandees'. Except for making war on foreigners, and her enthusiasm for the army and the police, there is little about her stance that is High Tory, certainly not her advocacy of what an earlier Conservative leader, Lord Hugh Cecil, called the 'cruelly bad system' of free market competition. Mrs Thatcher has gone out of the way to advertise her contempt for those traditional pillars of the Establishment, the Church, the Universities, and the Foreign Office; to destabilise the civil service; and to attack, as if it was guilty of jobbery, that 'service' middle class of professional people to which, in earlier times, business and trade deferred.

Modern Conservative politics generally seem to be shaped by a kind of negative dialectic, in which an incoming leadership defines itself by opposition to the previous incumbents. So far from proclaiming continuity, they positively flaunt their rupture with the past, so that a decade does not pass without a brand new conservatism taking the public stage. The adulation which leaders receive in office is only equalled by the contumely heaped on them when they have been deposed. Baldwin died in near disgrace; Butler, once acclaimed as the architect of the Party's post-war prosperity, seems to have dropped down a memory hole.

Doctrinally, the Party wears its principles lightly. There is no equivalent Clause 4 in the Party constitution, pledging it, say, to restore a society of hierarchical orders; no canonical texts against which policy documents have to be measured. The Party has been, by turns, free-trade, protectionist, and then free-trade again; it is successively European and Atlanticist, imperialist and isolationist; at one moment it advocates the 'smack' of firm government, at the next it is a protagonist of laissez-faire and in the case of Mrs Thatcher, of both simultaneously. Its origins as a 'country' party have not inhibited it from making a home colony of the City of London, the one section of the business community that seems to have done really well under Mrs Thatcher; nor its historical association with the Church of England from 'spitting blood' at its more pacific bishops.

It is not surprising, then, that the Party manifests a kind of selective amnesia where its own history is concerned. There is no Militant Tendency at Party conference to fight the cause of imperial preference, nor historic splits which have descended from the Jacobites or the non-Jurors. Party faction fights, though vicious, seem more in the nature of *frondes* than of ideologically motivated divisions on issue of principle, and perhaps that is why they are usually short-lived. There is no National Museum of Conservative Life in the Royal Borough of Kensington, to match that of the labour movement in Limehouse – no walls where the swords of the Manchester yeomanry could be hung, no glass-case for Lord Curzon's monocle, no stand for Neville Chamberlain's umbrella (the one he carried back from Munich).

The hangers and floggers in the Party – a majority constituency to judge by the decibel count of Conference applause – do not make an annual pilgrimage to Newgate, though Mrs Thatcher, who has consistently voted for the death penalty since 1962, must have given them some encouragement. There is no national memorial to General

Mrs Thatcher contemplates dispatching her critics to the workhouse

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Dyer, the butcher of Jallianwalea Bagh, though a derogatory mention of his name can still excite a vindication in the *Daily Telegraph* (a recent letter blames the massacre on the fact that the Indians did not use the second exit from the field when the troops began to fire on them).

Philosophically, too, Conservatives have been suspicious of history, preferring to ground their policies on appeals to general principles and rejecting any notion of evolutionary development or of progress from darkness to light. Legitimacy, Roger Scruton tells us, arises 'transcendentally'. 'The authentic man of the Right,' echoes a contributor to the *Salisbury Review*, 'believes in the primacy of metaphysics'. 'Human nature is prior to . . . human history.' History can provide nostalgic reminders of a world that has been lost, as it did for Baldwin in the 1920s, or, as it does for Mrs Thatcher today, symbolic reassurance that whatever else may have changed, national values are solid. Or, as 'philosophy teaching by example', it can provide illustrations of the great truths in the Conservative cabbala, such as that self-interest is a 'mighty virtue' and that we are all born unequal and ought to be able to exploit our natural advantages to the full. It can even provide Mrs Thatcher's leading speechwriter (see Ferdinand Mount, *The Subversive Family*) with arguments against Jesus Christ. But history, in any developmental sense, is foreign to the Tory mind.

'Tradition', then, is apt to resolve itself into what Haydn White calls 'meta-history', a kind of a-historical history which deals in mythmaking categories, such as the 'British way of life' and makes timeless entities of such familiar landmarks of the domestic scene as 'law and order'. It is a history dominated by a leading idea, in which contingent principles become immutable, and the best which theoretically can be hoped for is that of the limited good.

This relative indifference to history, which – it could be argued – distinguishes the Conservatives from parties and groupings on the Left, allows them to treat 'tradition' as a kind of adjustable code which can be adapted to the imperatives of the moment. Often it could be shown – and this is pre-eminently the case with Mrs Thatcher, who seems to derive more of her sustenance from a kind of displaced radical nonconformity than from the patrician traditions of her Party's past – that the Conservatives are not so much following 'tradition' as inventing it, recycling the events of the past to give lustre to present performance. History is invoked not to *explain* the present, but to give what Oakshott calls 'intimations' of the right course to pursue, so that however much the notion of 'tradition' is invoked, it is always the present which dwarfs it. The mirror, then, which Conservatives turn on the past shows an image, not of their predecessors but of themselves, and the voice they hear in the echo-chamber is not at all ancestral, but their own. □

A companion article by Raphael Samuel on Tory atavism and myth will appear next month.

MONOPOLIES

The public interest

A. D. Bain asks when a decision of the Monopolies Commission, from which he resigned, can be overturned

WHAT IS THE POINT in asking the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to investigate mergers if the government is going to overturn its decisions? That is the thought in many minds after the government's unprecedented action in the Charter Consolidated/Anderson Strathclyde case. It is a good question. But it would be a mistake to jump to the conclusion that the Mergers Commission has no useful role to play, or that governments should always accept its recommendations. After all, the Fair Trading Act does provide for the possibility that a Commission recommendation against a merger may not be implemented by the government. The real issue is whether the circumstances in this particular case justify the government's action, not whether such action should be ruled out of court altogether.

In a merger inquiry, the Mergers Commission undertakes many of the functions of a jury. Of course, it does more than any jury, because it is expected to make its own investigations to establish the facts, as well as to sift and assess the evidence presented to it. Nevertheless, it resembles a jury in that its members have to form their own views on the conclusions to be drawn. It comes as no surprise that opinions sometimes differ, and the Fair Trading Act provides that any recommendation against a merger must have the support of at least two-thirds of the members of the Commission involved.

The group from the Commission concerned with any merger has one other important difference from a jury: it is not chosen at random. In fact, like the membership of the Mergers Commission as a whole, it is selected to provide a balance of interest and experience, which may be relevant to the case under consideration. Thus, in the Anderson Strathclyde case, the group consisted of the Chairman of the Commission (a barrister), an academic economist, a solicitor, a senior trade union official, a director of a management consultancy firm, and the chief executive of a group of retail companies.

In what circumstances might the government be justified in overruling the verdict of a jury selected in this way? I do not imagine that anyone would seriously contend that the government had the right to act arbitrarily and to overturn a recommendation without good grounds. Moreover, I think it would be agreed that the responsible Minister is under an obligation to state clearly the grounds on which his decision is based, including the advice he receives from the Director General of Fair Trading, whom he is bound by the Act to consult.

ONE LEGITIMATE REASON for overruling a Commission recommendation would be that the report in question did not satisfy the requirements laid down in the Fair Trading Act. The Director General, in reviewing the reports submitted to him, must presumably satisfy himself that the law has been complied with. If not, he would be bound so to advise the Minister, and the Minister in turn would be expected to reject the recommendation.

The Commission's interpretation of the public interest could also conceivably provide valid grounds for the Minister to reject its recommendation. The scope of the public interest is not in fact restricted by the Act, but it would hardly be proper for the Mergers Commission to stray beyond the limits of industrial, labour or other economic and commercial matters into more general political issues. For example, while the thought of South African control is anathema to many, it would be quite wrong for members of the Commission to allow their own views on the South African question to influence their judgment in a merger inquiry. (I hasten to add that there is no reason to believe that they have ever done so.) If they were to do so, the government would be fully entitled to set their recommendation aside.

A third conceivable circumstance in which the government might legitimately over-ride a Commission recommendation would be if the Commission had failed to take account of some major consideration of national interest. It is not easy to think of an example in circumstances where the Commission had recommended *against* a merger. On the other hand, where the Fair Trading Act does not in fact give the Minister power to intervene, the government might, for example, deem it to be against the national interest for a foreign company to gain control of a UK enterprise which was engaged in sensitive, military work, even if the Commission were to take a contrary view.

It must be conceded, then, that situations *could* arise in which the government would

Professor Bain resigned from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission when the government refused to accept the majority report on Anderson Strathclyde.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

□ A Cononley man chewed a policeman's helmet to pieces when he was arrested, Skipton magistrates heard on Wednesday. – *Craven Herald and Pioneer* (Brian Dunn)

□ Passengers had moved forward, but were not allowed on board. 'We only stopped to tell you that we don't stop here on Sundays,' said the guard. 'If you want to catch a train, you will have to walk to the next station at Netley, where we do stop on Sundays.' – *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

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have valid grounds for overturning a Commission recommendation. But equally, there are many reasons which might be offered for such a decision which must be rejected as invalid.

FIRST, THERE ARE the political prejudices, or other preconceptions, of Ministers. Provided that they work within the ambit of the Fair Trading Act, it is for the Commission, the jury, not for Ministers, to decide whether a particular merger is or is not against the public interest. Secondly, when the Commission is made by a majority, with a minority dissenting, the Act does not give the Minister the right to choose between the alternative views expressed. Provided that there is the necessary two-thirds majority, and provided that the majority report complies with the law, the Minister has no right to side with the minority, however forcefully its opinions may be expressed.

Thirdly, the Minister should pay no heed to the composition of the majority and minority. Governments having appointed members to the Commission, Ministers should respect their judgment. The Act does not give the Chairman more than the normal single deliberative vote. And there is in any case no reason to believe that, in drawing conclusions from the evidence, the Chairman has any special, superior expertise.

With these arguments in mind, can the government be said to have given valid grounds for overturning the Commission's recommendations in the Anderson Strathclyde case? We are told that there was a 'powerful dissenting report of the minority, which included the Chairman of the MMC'. We are told that the Director General of Fair Trading 'strongly recommended against preventing the merger'; but we are not told why. We are told that 'it is no more than speculative to conclude that the merger might harm the public interest', a view which could, perhaps, be attributed to the minority but which certainly conflicts with what the majority said in their report.

None of these reasons, singly or together, provides the necessary justification for the Minister to set aside the recommendation of the majority. There has been no suggestion from the Minister that the report does not comply with the law, no suggestion that the public interest has been misinterpreted, and there has been no argument of over-riding national interest.

The government's decision has weakened the authority of the Mergers Commission. Now that the precedent of over-turning a decision has been created, the possibility that political lobbying will lead to a favourable conclusion cannot be ruled out. Nevertheless, the wound was, to a degree, self-inflicted: it is unusual (to say the least) for a minority in the Mergers Commission to express itself so forcefully. Provided the Commission can show a more united front, confining the inevitable disagreements to the conclusions to be drawn from the facts, the government will be unable to find plausible grounds for over-turning Commission recommendations in future, and the damage can be contained. □

An open letter to the Soviet Peace Committee

Before Christmas, Yuri Zhukov, the President of the Soviet Peace Committee sent a letter to many peace campaigners in the West in which he accused the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation of seeking 'not to rally but to disunite the anti-war movements.' We publish END's reply to these accusations.

London
January 1983

Dear Mr Zhukov,

We have just come to the end of three years of incessant campaigning for the cause of European Nuclear Disarmament. We are now entering upon a year which is likely to be decisive for Europe and for the world. Either the nuclear arms-race receives, in 1983, a major check, or all hope of disarmament and of relaxation of tension between the blocs may be at an end. At no moment should those who are working for peace be more responsible in their actions.

Yet to our astonishment we learn that you have chosen this moment to make an attack upon our movement and its allies, in a letter sent around widely to peace organisations and to individuals in Europe. This is an action which could weaken and divide the peace movement.

We do not understand your motives. But we cannot believe that your Committee wishes to act in such a way as to endanger world peace. For this reason we have attended closely to your letter and are now replying to its arguments with care.

Your letter confuses a number of distinct questions. We will deal first with a practical matter – the arrangements for the Convention next May in Berlin.

At the Convention for European Nuclear Disarmament held in Brussels in July 1982 it was agreed to go forward to the Second Convention in Berlin, and the Liaison Committee which had prepared the first Convention was given the task of preparing for the second. We are aware that, for historical reasons, this divided city has become a place of political sensitivity and that tact must be

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exercised to avoid any suggestion of intervening in its affairs. Indeed, our representatives on the Liaison Committee had already raised this question and had received assurances that such tact has been and will continue to be exercised.

In particular we have received the strongest assurances that no-one concerned in Convention arrangements has any intention of making 'the German Question' into a major item in the Convention agenda. You have clearly been misinformed on this point. We consider that the problem of the demilitarisation of both German states is a proper and necessary question for discussion in the European peace movements (of both East and West), and one which may best be raised in relation to nuclear-free zones, and within the context of Central Europe more generally – perhaps on lines first set out in the former Rapacki Plans. We hope to gain your agreement on this.

If you suppose that it is the intention of anyone to provoke some 'confrontation' around this question in Berlin, then we regret that such misapprehensions should have been aroused. We have heard no such suggestions from anyone concerned in the organisation of the Convention. On the contrary, Berlin was chosen because its divided status symbolises the unnatural bloc division of Europe which it must be the task of peace movements, West and East, to bring to an end.

We are glad to set your anxieties on this point at rest. Yet, starting off from this matter of genuine concern, you have rashly extended your letter into a wholesale condemnation of non-aligned forces in the Western peace movement. This is a strange and unacceptable intervention in our affairs. You accuse the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament (END), the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, the Berlin 'Working Group for a Nuclear Free Europe', and associated groups, of 'attempting to split the anti-war movement', 'to infiltrate cold war elements into it'. You even allege that the 'true objective' of the Brussels Convention was 'not to rally but to disunite anti-war movements'. We are accused of distracting attention from NATO's plans to modernise its European armoury in 1983, and even of using the peace movement as a cover 'to conceal and justify an aggressive militarist policy of the USA and NATO'!

HOW DO THESE accusations fit with the facts? The Committee for European Nuclear Disarmament (END) was founded in direct response to the NATO modernisation decision of 12 December 1979. It was a British-based organisation which rapidly developed relations with like-minded organisations and individuals throughout Western Europe. So far from 'infiltrating' the peace movement, it was one of the first organisations prominent in the revival of the movement.

The Committee included among its members elements distinguished by their activity in earlier campaigns for peace; representatives of CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), of the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace (ICDP), and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, as well as Members of Parliament and experienced peace researchers. Publications sponsored by our Committee have become texts for a new generation of peace activists. The Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament which we issued in April 1980 has been signed by thousands of men and women across Europe and has served in some places as a charter of the new peace movement.

Throughout these three years of campaigning the first object of all our work has been opposition to NATO 'modernisation' (cruise missiles and Pershing IIs). The briefest acquaintance with our publications and actions will show this at once. This is where our first responsibility lies – at home – and we required no prompting or directives from organisations in the Soviet Union to teach us our own duties (although, naturally, our opponents accuse us on every possible occasion of being servants of 'Moscow'). We have made it clear again and again that, while we strive to bring about multilateral disarmament, we will refuse cruise and Pershing weapons unilaterally if need be.

But none of this will satisfy the Soviet Peace Committee. On the contrary, you appear to demand that the Western peace movement must applaud without reserve all Soviet policies (whether military or diplomatic); indeed, must align itself *with* these Soviet policies, in a one-sided way. And since we refuse to do this, you feel free to slander us as 'infiltrators' whose aim is 'to conceal and justify an aggressive militarist policy of the USA and NATO'.

The great peace movements today in Western Europe and in the United States do not favour either of the superpowers, and do not seek the advantage of either NATO or the Warsaw powers. They are not founded upon partisan ideological premises. The dominant outlook in many of these movements is 'non-aligned'. They are movements of resistance to nuclear weapons, West and East, movements for human survival.

We have two objectives. The first is to halt the nuclear arms race and enforce disarmament. The second is to begin to break down the unnatural barriers which divide our continent, and to prepare the way for the ending of the bloc system, not only by agreements between governments, but also

by opening up direct communication between citizens, establishing trust, and commencing a new East-West dialogue of peace.

As to the first objective, it is untrue that we hold to some rigid concept of 'equal responsibility' on the part of both superpowers for the nuclear arms race. What we said, in our Appeal of April 1980, in the context of discussion of the growing militarisation of both blocs, was this:

> We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and have committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.

This remains our view. And it remains our view that – however the Cold War first started, and whoever's was the main responsibility – the military establishments of both sides now stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other, 'answering' each others' weapons and reinforcing each others' strength.

Publicists and peace researchers in the Western peace movements have discussed these questions with care, and have given examples of the guilt of both parties. Unfortunately many of these publications are available only to a handful of research specialists in favoured institutions in the Soviet Union, whereas official accounts of Soviet policies are rather more widely available to Western readers. If we are to look forward to a genuine dialogue, with mass participation, then we would welcome your help in rectifying this situation. Would it not help, on both sides, if we were to publish each others' policy documents, so that our supporters can benefit from the discussion of disagreements as well as agreements? And, as a first step, may we invite you to approach the Editor of *Pravda*, with the suggestion that he publish in full the text of the END Appeal of April 1980, and we, in our turn, will invite a major British newspaper to publish a text of the same length from the Soviet Peace Committee?

IT IS NOT our view, in a historical perspective, that there is 'equal blame' for the nuclear arms-race. We are well aware that nuclear weapons were first developed (in competition with Nazi Germany) during World War II by the Western powers, and then were first used by the United States. We accept, in general, the view of Mr George Kennan that subsequently it has been the West which 'at almost every step of the road' has 'taken the lead in the development of this sort of weaponry'. The Soviet authorities have sought to answer each development in the same kind, and, in the past 15 to 20 years, by massive investment of skills and resources, have surged forward to 'parity' in nuclear forces.

We have repeatedly made it clear that we regard United States and NATO weapons development (and strategies for their use) as being the more dangerous and aggressive in the current period. We welcome some of the proposals made by the Soviet government in the past two years – several of which are mentioned in your letter – and we also welcome the proposals made by Mr Adropov on 21 December. These merit urgent and positive consideration by Western governments, and we are pressing for such a response.

Nevertheless, the leaders of all states today make large professions of their desire to disarm, in order to make a favourable impression upon public opinion. There can be

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only one way of judging this matter: to examine, not professions, but actions. And under this examination Soviet policies are also open to criticism.

Examine the question of the SS-20s. Of course your leaders say that these weapons are only for 'defence', just as our leaders tell us that we need cruise missiles for 'defence'. Are you surprised that Western public opinion dislikes and fears the SS-20s, which are deadly and accurate weapons targeted upon our own cities?

In our Appeal of April 1980 which opposed NATO modernisation we also called on the Soviet Union to halt at once its deployment of SS-20s. The numbers deployed at that time were about 150. There was no response to our Appeal. Next year on Hiroshima Day (6 August) END issued, together with the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV), a further appeal for actions to resist cruise and Pershing II missiles, together with a call to the Soviet Union to halt and to commence reductions in the numbers of the SS-20s. The numbers deployed now approached a total of 230. Once again our call to the Soviet Union met with no response. Nor did it meet with a positive response from your Committee, to whom we sent a copy of the Appeal. On the contrary, your Vice-President, Mr Oleg Kharkhardin, wrote back to us (11 December '81) 'the Soviet people and their government will not agree to unilateral disarmament'. Since you replied to us in terms identical to those of our own government and of NATO apologists (who also refuse any actions of disarmament on the grounds that they cannot 'agree to unilateral disarmament') we were at a loss to know how to reply to your letter. In our view, true peace movements have the first duty to press upon their own governments the need for restraint, for actions and not words.

Deployment of SS-20s continued, as you are aware, until a total of some 315 was achieved. The continuous deployment of these missiles throughout 1980, 1981, and some part of 1982, did not help the cause of peace. Each additional missile was an additional argument against the Western peace movement, and made our work more difficult. If you had urged the Soviet authorities to heed our Appeal of August 1981, and if they had acted in response to our call, then the Western peace movement might already have triumphed in its rejection of cruise and Pershing missiles.

We are not ascribing the main blame for the present nuclear arms-race to Soviet policies. But we cannot agree with you that these policies are blameless. In our view both the SS-20s and NATO's new missiles are abhorrent additions to the existing level of nuclear overkill: neither can be truly considered to be weapons of 'defence' nor to contribute to any nation's 'security'.

We invite you to reconsider your basic premise, which is that Western weapons must be aggressive and bad whereas Soviet weapons must be defensive and good. And we invite you to turn your backs upon the futile arguments of 'balance' (which are questions for military advisors and not for peace workers) and put your faith instead in a transcontinental movement of peoples. It is our settled view that both sets of weaponry are evil, and that it is the first responsibility of peace activists in every nation to watch and to criticise the military policies of their own nation first of all.

MAY WE ALSO explain further the second objective of our movement, which is overcoming the barriers of the bloc system which divides Europe into two unnatural

halves? So long as the two armed blocs confront each other, we can only expect one emergency after another until the final emergency of nuclear war descends.

We welcome the reminder in your letter that the Warsaw Treaty Organisation still holds to its proposal for the simultaneous dissolution of both the WTO and of NATO. And we welcome also the recent proposals of the leaders of the WTO powers in Prague on 6 January. We promise to study these proposals with care. And we shall press Western governments to give them a positive response.

Yet if the objective of the dissolution of both blocs is to be more than a pious phrase, it will require much active political preparation. It cannot come about through diplomacy alone. Nor will it suddenly arrive, tomorrow or next year, by a decree of the President of the United States and the First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. Nor can our peace movements be content with some limited agreement between military and political leaders of both sides for new measures of 'arms control' which only confirm and enforce the present divided and adversary *status quo*. We must work together for larger objectives.

The continent of Europe has in the past 30 years seen bitter arguments and divisions. Barbed wire divides not only the territories of the two blocs, there is also barbed wire in people's minds and hearts. The change which we work for can only come about after a preparatory process in which people on both sides come into closer communication with each other, modify their perceptions of each other, learn to tolerate differences and establish mutual trust. There can be no 'victory' of one side over the other without war. Instead, there must be a healing process.

We hold that this healing must commence now, while concern for peace is at new heights. This cannot be done by the directives of governments (which harbour, for historical reasons, deep suspicions of each other) but only, in the first place, by direct citizens' exchanges. We stated this in our original Appeal, which has been taken as a theme for the Berlin Convention:

> We must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other.

And we insisted upon 'the right of all citizens, East or West, to take part in this common movement and to engage in every kind of exchange.'

Of course such spontaneous and informal citizens' exchanges present various difficulties. They are resisted by cold war forces (whether ideological or in the security services) of both sides. Our peace movements in the West are under continuous attack for their supposed 'disloyalty' to the ideological imperatives of NATO. We ask you to use your own influence to modify the rigidly-defensive stance of certain Soviet authorities – even if this brings down on you a little of the same disapproval which we meet with, on our side, in this work.

Certainly we share your desire for a 'united universal anti-war movement'. But it is wholly unrealistic to suppose that the agenda of the peace movement can be narrowed down to the question of certain missiles only, and that other problems of political or military confrontation which are concerning millions in Europe can be kept off the agenda as (in your words) 'issues that have nothing to do with this task'.

In the West many thousands of those who are now leading activists in the peace movements are also critics of aspects of Soviet reality. These activists are perhaps those whom you describe as 'anti-Soviet' or as 'anti-socialist elements'. This is a false description. Many of them are social-democrats, trade unionists, liberals, Eurocommunists, Christians, feminists, ecologists, and men and women of no political allegiance. They have this in common: they do not wish to make war (whether hot or cold) on the Warsaw Treaty nations nor to threaten them with nuclear weapons. They wish to relax military tension in Europe and to encourage communication between citizens. As for the difference between social systems, it is their belief that peace will make it easier for the peoples of nations, West as well as East, to make whatever changes they may wish in their own affairs, in their own way and without external interference.

Thousands of activists in the Western peace movement are deeply concerned about offences against 'human rights' in countries (whether in Latin America, South Africa or Turkey) where 'Western' influence or complicity can be shown. We have protested and continue to protest about these questions. But these same activists remember with dismay the entry of Warsaw Pact armed forces into Czechoslovakia in 1968: many are concerned about questions of civil rights in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: and for two years have watched with the deepest anxiety events in Poland.

If all those whom you regard as 'anti-Soviet elements' were to be purged from the

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Western peace movement, then that movement would be reduced in numbers from hundreds of thousands to mere hundreds. It would be reduced to a handful of small pro-Soviet committees, without influence or independence.

We must reassure you that we do not see the non-aligned peace movements as movements promoting the 'destabilisation' of any part of Europe. But the barriers which divide Europe must in time be overcome. This is in the interest of all parties. Sooner or later there must also be a peace treaty – whether this takes the form of a mutual security agreement or a non-aggression pact – which establishes the status of both German states.

But our position on such questions is in no way provocative. We do not wish to redraw European frontiers, but to throw these frontiers open. The barriers can only be overcome in peaceful ways, as regional agreements (covering both nuclear and conventional weapons) are negotiated. In this way, step by step, individual nations, East or West, may regain some autonomy from their respective blocs and rejoin a peaceful community of European nations – a community within which the Soviet Union will have a rightful and influential part. Only a

transcontinental peace movement, supported by millions, can provide the conditions of calm and of self-discipline in which such a healing-process will become possible. This question is challenging: but it is also complex. We hope to discuss it with you further.

YOU MENTION in your letter the Helsinki Final Act. It is well known in the Western peace movement that clauses on certain human rights are, unfortunately, often disregarded in the Soviet Union. And this gives us, every day, difficulties in our work for peace.

In particular we urge upon you that you do all in your power to influence the relevant Soviet authorities to permit unofficial groups of Soviet citizens to take part in constructive work for peace and to communicate freely with peace movements in the West. The independent groups working for the establishment of trust between citizens of the Soviet Union and of the West – groups established in Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa, Novosibirsk and other towns – are, in our view, by no means made up of 'renegades and criminals', as they have been described by TASS. They are scientists, engineers, teachers, doctors and others who support the peace policies of the USSR and who wish to contribute to the work for peace, through their own initiatives and in accordance with Soviet law.

We welcome their work. Establishing trust between citizens is an urgent part of our work for peace. It is neither possible nor proper that this should be left in the hands of a few centralised institutions. The harassment by Soviet security authorities of members of the Moscow group, the temporary internment in mental hospital of the artist Sergei Batovrin, and other widely-reported matters, have made our work for peace more difficult in recent months. If members of these groups were to be put on trial, the cause of peace would be greatly harmed.

We say to you with sincerity: if the freedom of action of such groups is permitted, then we shall not respect the Soviet Peace Committee or the Soviet authorities less – we shall respect you more. The leaders of the Warsaw nations have made significant proposals (6 January) for lessening tension between the two blocs. The peace movements of West and East must now put flesh and blood upon the framework of such proposals, by increasing every form of direct citizens' exchange, by twinning cities and all kinds of groups, by extending nuclear-free zones into both halves of Europe, and also by overthrowing some of the outdated ideological taboos which have passed down to us from the time of the old Cold War. Will you help us in this work?

Mr Zhukov! Do you know when we received your ill-considered letter in Britain? We received it two days after the action of more than 30,000 women at Greenham Common – an action which lifted our movement onto a new plane and which captured the imagination of millions – an action in which many members and supporters of our Committee took part.

We read your letter with astonishment. And we have now given you some plain answers. We hope that you will now recognise your error. There can be no useful dialogue between us unless this is founded upon honesty and the open discussion of differences. We shall of course publish your letter and our reply, so that our own supporters can consider the issues. May we suggest that you do the same, so that your own supporters in the Soviet Union can be brought into the dialogue?

If you are ready to approach our differences in the same spirit, we shall be glad to meet with you, on the first convenient occasion, to go into these matters further. We urge you also to attend the Berlin Convention; or, if you still find this impossible, we might look forward to some smaller and more private conference at which the problems of the bloc division of Europe can be debated in a constructive spirit? We offer our best services in assisting with any such arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Meg Beresford (Secretary)
On behalf of the END Co-ordinating Committee

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DIARY

Christopher Price

First business back this week has been the guillotine to the Transport Bill; this anti-cheap-fares device, which had not got very far in Committee, will now slide into legislation, substantially undiscussed. Some of my colleagues prefer this strategy of total opposition in Committee, even though it quickly attracts a guillotine of all the remaining stages. They calculate that the Bill would have gone through anyway, and at least they've smitten it hip and thigh; and it's all over comparatively quickly. I'm an unrepentant believer in the neglected art of guillotine brinkmanship. It's a bit like trout fishing—dangling as bait bits of promises to stop talking, for tiny concessions of substance; never going so fast that you're giving the Bill away, but always just fast enough so that the government thinks there's a chance of finishing by a half-agreed date. Even when the opposition front bench makes solemn and binding agreements about a finishing date, their backbenchers will find ways of making difficulties. So ministers make further little concessions, pressured as they are by Murdo Maclean, the engaging government business manager – who never really wants a guillotine and doesn't give a hoot what's in the Bill at the end of the day. I suspect it's a scenario to which we're about to move with the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill Committee, of which Willie Whitelaw is a reluctant and often absent member.

○

Poor Willie had a terrible first day of term, trying to explain away judicial near-murder in Kensington. For once the popular press have been genuinely shocked, though I suspect that if the police had shot the 'right' man their outrage would have been muted. It's the incompetence of our boys in blue rather than their thuggery which upsets the *Mail* and the *Express*. Willie's apologia was followed by a thoroughly dignified, but in Commons terms 'disorderly', nuclear-disarmament protest from women in the gallery; I quite understood their irritation about us talking of 'guillotines' rather than of 'cruise'. I had a feeling of violence and protest closing in on the Commons. Like the suffragettes and the IRA, these women have discovered that Parliment only really sits up and takes notice when something happens close to home.

○

The Liaison Committee of the House of Commons is an elderly and venerable coterie of chairmen of committees, of which, I, even with my grandfatherly status, am almost the baby. It's just produced its first Report ever – full of sensible little touches. (HMSO, HC92 £7.10). It has reviewed the first three years of the new select committee system and finds that it's working well. It wants the House, which consistently refuses to allow television cameras in the Chamber, to televise at least its committees. It may be that some of the chairmen fancy themselves in a British Watergate scandal as potential Senator Ervins. I don't know. But a hint is provided by the enthusiasm not only for TV but for scrutinising the security services as well – another Great Unmentionable in the eyes of governments of both parties. It is simply affirmed that select committees have the necessary powers already. So the relevant ones – Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Treasury and Defence – should get on with the job of looking at MI5, MI6, GCHQ, the Special Branch, the Prime Minister's responsibilities, the lot. The Defence Committee has already dipped a tentative toe into the subject of positive vetting, and civil servants seem ready to cooperate with them.

○

On Tuesdays I'm now a confirmed addict of *The Boys from the Blackstuff*, and pleased that it's become a cult. It inclines me to take back some of the brickbats I was throwing at the BBC the other day, since side by side with the Prime Minister's clinically psychotic utterances in the Falklands, the programme is a nice reminder of who is mad and who is sane in Britain today. Come to think of it 'Gimme a job' wouldn't be a bad election slogan. It is also encouraging that the series is possible even under the corpulent gaze of the lady's nominee as chairman, George Howard, and that there are those in the Beeb who still maintain the Corporation as a window of radical criticism against her

regime. I hope Luke Rittner realises that's his job at the Arts Council also, and treats his nominee chairman, Sir William Rees-Mogg, in the same spirit. He shouldn't worry that he only got the job with 11 votes out of 20 members present, or that Mogg's support for him stemmed from the Prime Minister's mistaken belief that he was some sort of businessman. Nor should he take the slightest notice of the infantile criticism that he only got three O levels – a positive qualification, it seems to me for the job of encouraging material even half as good as the *Blackstuff*. It will be an uphill task, in the face of constant humourless interference from his current master and mistress. But he should take heart and remember that just under 30 years ago *Godot* and *Look Back in Anger* exploded in the face of similar Tory philistinism and changed the cultural face of Britain. Luke would win himself a lot of very supportive friends if he helped that happen again.

○

Some local Labour Parties seem to me to have the qualities of Greek tragedy – bloodlust that continues inexorably from generation to generation. What other explanation can there be for the formal censuring of Anne Page in Islington (spouse of our erstwhile editor) for simply writing to the press defending state education? True, her party was continuing a boycott on the local paper, but long after the NUJ had made its peace. I suspect it has its origins in the venom with which the Right in North Islington pursued one Keith Venness in the '70s, for his proper campaign against the misdeeds of Michael O'Halloran and his friends. The London Labour Party has the chance to appear as a *deus ex machina* and end all the Islington nonsense this week. I hope they do.

○

Finally, a profound apology. There is one Lloyd's underwriter in the Commons, but it's not Bill Whitlock. He never has been one and never intends to be one in the future. Very sorry, Bill, I'll try to do better next time.

ROGER WODDIS

Mad north-north-west

'I am the true disarmer.' – Mrs Thatcher.

I am the true disarmer,
My message is brotherly love;
I don't know a hawk from a handsaw,
But I follow the flight of the dove.

I wept when I went to the Falklands
And saw where the crosses were put;
But Greenham is frightfully common,
And nobody travels on Foot.

The levels proposed by Gromyko
Are clearly designed to confuse,
But those who like freedom and justice
Are bound to love Pershing and cruise.

We've reason to fear SS-20,
And cause to look kindly on MIRV,
And while you may question my logic,
You'll have to admit to my nerve.

I am the true disarmer,
But balance means being ahead,
Though time spent in counting the profits
Leaves little for counting the dead.

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Peace women of Shibokusa

Leonie Caldecott

The wind blows low on the mountain:
The image of decay.
Thus the superior woman stirs up the people
And strengthens their spirit.

(From the *I Ching*, with slight liberty of gender)

IT WAS IN WINTER – 6 December 1981 – that I first met the Shibokusa women. They had come to the teeming megalopolis of Tokyo in order to address a Japanese women's peace rally, close to the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbour 41 years earlier.

When they rose to speak, dressed in traditional peasant cotton trousers and jacket and wide straw hat – four of them holding their banner and one of them delivering an impassioned, angry speech against the military – I almost jumped out of my seat. Next to their heart-felt and evident emotion, the rest of the speeches at the rally paled into insignificance. Excitedly, I asked my interpreter Yumiko Jansson who these women were.

She explained that their land, which was at the north foot of Mount Fuji, was being used by the Japanese self-defence force (Japan is not supposed to have an army as such, and her constitution is pledged to peace) for military exercises. Some of the women in the area had, she said, established a resistance movement to protest against this. By now I was well and truly hooked: my mind's eye leapt out of the city to the foot of the mountain. I resolved to get up there and talk to those women.

Sumiko Shimizu, secretary general of the Japan Women's Council, liaised for me with the *Shibokusa Hahano Kai* (Shibokusa Mothers' Committee) to which the women belonged, and made a date to visit them a week later. She accompanied Yumiko and me herself, and during the two-hour bus journey between Tokyo and Mount Fuji, she explained a good deal of the background to the Shibokusa women's story. They came, she said, from a rural Japanese community in which women were not so long ago (and perhaps still) treated little better than cattle, sitting on the ground while their menfolk occupied the *tatami* mat, eating the leftovers after the men had been fed, giving birth in the straw. And yet these women had become the leading lights of the Japanese peace movement, which at that time had not yet reached its new peak (resulting in nearly half a million people demonstrating in Tokyo six months later). The courageous example of the Shibokusa women, said Mrs Shimizu, was crucial at a time when Japan was showing signs of re-militarisation, increasing its arms budget and deleting references to war crimes from the history books.

WE GOT OFF the bus in Fuji Yoshida City, the cold winter air sharp in our nostrils and the graceful snow-covered contours of Mount Fuji rising above us. The town looked well-kept and prosperous. Mrs Shimizu explained that it used to be two small towns, but had been amalgamated into one and developed with the help of money that inevitably follows the presence of military in a civilian area.

Courtesy of the Japan Women's Peace Movement

A taxi took us outside the town and down a dirt track through some woods, the mountain lying ahead of us. We soon came to the perimeter of the military base; right next to the gate leading into it, there was a cottage enclosed in a small compound. It was from here, said Mrs Shimizu, that the Shibokusa women co-ordinated their resistance activities. They took it in turn – in shifts of two – to maintain a presence in the cottage. That day I met four of them, two of whom had stayed on from the previous shift. One of them, Mie Amano, acted as spokeswoman, the other three, including their leader Kimie Watanabe, occasionally adding a few words of their own. Mie Amano's behaviour was quite unlike the traditional image of cautious, formal Japanese womanhood. Her hands, which like those of her companions were worn and leathery from manual labour, were constantly moving as she spoke.

As we walked into the compound where the cottage stood, I saw that the thatch on the roof had been covered with shiny sheets of corrugated metal. Mie Amano, noticing our enquiring glances, told us that right-wing groups had started harassing the women, gathering outside the cottage with taunts and cries of 'go home you old witches', throwing stones and burning brands. The women, afraid that the thatch would catch fire, had been forced to cover it. Other precautions were in evidence as well – bits of barbed wire on the walls of the compound, and even two young lads from the village who had been brought in to protect the women should the need arise. These women had obviously touched a raw nerve somewhere, I thought, as I stepped into the tiny cottage and removed my shoes. They could hardly be dismissed as insignificant.

Inside the cottage, we all sat around a low table covered in a heavy cloth. Instead of kneeling in the usual Japanese position, with my feet tucked under my body, I was motioned to stretch my legs out under the table. To my astonishment, the area sealed in by the heavy table cloth was heated, a comforting thing on that bitterly cold winter day. The women produced what Yumiko told me were a great delicacy for us to eat: small packets of rice and red beans wrapped in wafer-thin pieces of dark green seaweed. Lots of good protein, I told myself firmly as I began to nibble one, and soon started to enjoy it.

DURING THE CONVERSATION that followed, I began to piece together the story of the Shibokusa women. The land which lay between this cottage and the mountain had been used by the local people since the Edo period – around the 17th century. This was called *Iriaiken*, the right of common people to cultivate and earn a living from a certain place – in this case the Shibokusa area. It was in fact rather poor land, but years of work had enabled them to grow beans and radishes there, and even create a silkworm industry. Then, in 1936, the militarisation of Japan came to disrupt the fragile prosperity of the community: the army began to execute drills on the Shibokusa land. After the war, the US army stationed troops on the site, which, say the Shibokusa women, led to a startling increase in prostitution in the area. 'We women were treated like dust on the ground,' says Mie Amano.

Even after the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed between Japan and the US, the land was still not released by the military. Finally, on 20 June 1955, 70 local farmers staged a protest on the Shibokusa land.

'We were arrested as rioters,' recalls Mie Amano, 'but as they were taking us by jeep to Fuji Yoshida, we crashed and the chief of police was killed. It was an accident, but it drew attention to what we had been doing. Officials from Tokyo came and promised us another 50 hectares of land in compensation for some people who had lost their livelihood. It was poor land, but they planted pine trees on it. Now that the trees are fully grown, the government claims it is state land again . . .'

Because of the poverty of the land, the men of the area have tended to go away to find work, leaving the subsistence level cul-

Leonie Caldecott's article won last year's Catherine Pakenham award and will be published in the Women's Press anthology Keeping the Peace *next week.*

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tivation to the women – all the more so since the loss of the Shibokusa area. And so the women have taken over the struggle, building a series of cottages on or around the military base and occupying them, small bastions of ordinary life amid the soldiers' incessant preparations for death. The cottage where I was sitting now listening to their story, with the hens pecking the ground outside and the steaming pot of green tea on the table, was the fifteenth one they had built.

IN 1970, 1,000 RIOT POLICE turned up to evict a small group of women from one of these cottages. 'We were determined to die rather than move,' says Mie Amano. 'We had dressed all in white, the appropriate way to face death. Lots of press people turned up, expecting to see bloodshed: we'd threatened to blow ourselves and the police up with some unexploded hand grenades we'd found on the base. But at the last minute Kimie Watanabe said that in fact our dying would serve no purpose, and that if we remained alive we could go on resisting, building new cottages, not letting anyone forget about us. So we surrendered.'

This, I reflected, must have been a crucial turning point. Once you have faced death and accepted it, but decided to go on living, many fears and anxieties surely lose their power over you. The Shibokusa women have, in a sense, nothing to lose, and this is what makes them strong. 'Many people in the town have been bought off by the authorities,' says Mie Amano. 'They are comfortable and can't see anything wrong with the way this land is being used. They despise us and treat us with contempt. So we are not only struggling against the government and the military, but against attitudes which we have to confront every day. If there were not people in the outside world who supported us' – and here she bowed to Mrs Shimizu – 'we should not be able to continue this fight. We also try to combat local corruption: making sure people don't get bribed to vote a certain way in local elections, for instance.'

But the Shibokusa women's main activity is disrupting military exercises. In groups of up to ten, they make their way into the exercise area (there are a host of routes, they say, the secret of which they keep to themselves), crawling around the undergrowth and popping up in the middle of the firing. They plant scarecrows to decoy the troops. Sometimes they'll build a fire and sit round it singing and clapping their hands, totally ignoring officials who try to move them on. They are frequently arrested and taken to the police station.

'They are quite gentle with us, because they are afraid of provoking us – they hate it when we start screaming! The police have realised that though we are physically easier to arrest than men, we're more trouble afterwards. Men put up a fight, but once it's over, they just give everything away. We never give our name, age or anything. We just say that we're so old we can't remember when we were born or who we are . . .'

Indeed most of them are in their late fifties and sixties, or even older. They say that, by taking on the struggle themselves, they free younger women for childrearing or other work. 'If anything happens to us, it's not a disaster. The younger ones could soon take our place.'

I asked Mie Amano what they hoped to achieve in the long run. She answered that it now went much deeper than the desire to get their land back. 'As we carried on with our campaign, we realised that the whole phenomenon of militarism is violence against the land, wherever it takes place. So we are really a part of the wider anti-war movement. You see, Mount Fuji is the symbol of Japan. If they are preparing war on her flanks, how can they say Japan desires peace?'

BEFORE LEAVING, I went outside the compound to take photographs and to gaze through the fence at the mountain. I felt as though I could never have my fill of that sight, and understood at last why Japanese artists have never tired of drawing it. One of the Shibokusa women tugged at my sleeve and pointed into the tall grass a little way from where we were standing. A Japanese soldier crouched there, taking photographs of us with a telescopic lens. I recalled the women in Tokyo pointing out two men taking photographs during the demonstration the week before, telling me that they were not from the press. I had pointed my own camera at them, and the men had turned away, embarrassed. Now it didn't seem to matter. Let them know who we are, I thought; let us stand up and be counted. I noticed that Mie Amano's plump, tanned face was criss-crossed with laughter lines.

'Don't imagine our lives are miserable,' she said, nodding emphatically as Yumiko translated. 'It's fun to make a nuisance of ourselves and embarrass the authorities. This work is our whole life – we enjoy every minute, but we're not lazy about it. This long-term resistance is the first of its kind in Japan. We will continue it to the end. I have seen time and time again how Japanese men will not endure the worst: they have no patience, they give up or get violent, rather than sitting it out.'

She folded her arms in her sleeves and faced the mountain. 'This land used to be green, but they have destroyed so much vegetation with their explosives . . . They've also taken away a lot of grass and bushes to prevent us having cover for our activities.' I asked her if there were ever moments when they felt it was hopeless. She thought for a minute and then replied.

'We are not educated: most of us cannot read or write. But we are strong because we are close to the earth and we know what matters. Our conviction that the military is wrong is unshakeable.' She waved her arm at the others, blinking their eyes in the winter sun, and laughed. 'We are the strongest women in Japan! And we want other women to be like us.'

I too laughed, and we bowed to one another, Japanese style. It was much more than a polite formality. I salute your spirit, sister, mother, warrior against war. □

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ZIMBABWE

Rough justice

Fred Barnes reports on Mugabe's anti-guerrilla Task Force

THE ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT's decision, earlier this month, to allow white farmers in troubled Matabeleland to arm themselves, evoked memories of the toughest years of the liberation war. The parallel is more than superficial. Robert Mugabe's government has adopted the measures of its Rhodesian predecessor – mass detention, torture and beatings – to crush 'dissident' guerrillas. This activity has been the work of a Task Force, led by a former Rhodesian officer and closely modelled on the old Fire Force counter-insurgency unit.

There is now evidence of at least six detention camps: two at Tsholotsho and one each at Nkayi, Lupane, Mushumbi Pools and Gonakudzingwa. The last of these used to be a Rhodesian detention centre, where Joshua Nkomo was held for many years. At a conservative estimate there are now some 5,000 people in these camps. Detention orders do not seem to have been issued – so all are being held illegally.

More than 300 others are in jails, mainly in Harare and Bulawayo. These tend to be the more senior members of ZAPU, Nkomo's party, and ZIPRA, its former guerrilla wing. The 'dissidents' are mainly former ZIPRA fighters angered at Nkomo's dismissal from the government early last year, at the treatment of ex-combatants and at the slow pace of political reform. Nkomo and the ZAPU leadership have disowned them.

The two most prominent prison detainees are Dumiso Dabengwa and Lieutenant-General Lookout Masuku, former ZIPRA commanders who were picked up nearly a year ago after arms caches were uncovered on ZAPU-owned farms. Like many of those in prison they are held under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, a Rhodesian law also used to detain Mugabe and Nkomo in their time. Their trial is finally expected this month or next.

There was an attempt, last year, to deny the two ZIPRA men access to their lawyers. This was successfully challenged in the High Court. In response, the authorities banned visits from their families. But at least Dabengwa and Masuku are somewhat in the public eye. They are luckier than the seven men (at least) who have died in detention. Among them was Lieutenant Collen Mhlanga, an army deserter who was arrested last April, held for a day or so at Harare's Chikurubi prison and then admitted to hospital. He died hours later of a brain haemorrhage.

It has been hard to monitor condi-

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tions in the detention camps because journalists are not allowed into the area – indeed, the very existence of the camps has not been reported before. One former detainee describes how he was treated in Tsholotsho: 'They beat you from the time you arrive, sometimes just beating us as they found us, sometimes taking you for a good long beating.' Kenneth (not his real name) was detained in Bulawayo because he had no identification card. After being beaten over two days at the police station, he admitted that he was an unemployed former guerrilla and was taken to Tsholotsho with several dozen others.

There are two camps at Tsholotsho. The larger contains over 2,000 men, women and children, including former guerrillas, unemployed youths and people from the villages and townships suspected of helping 'dissidents'. There is no shelter, no toilet, no water supply. No blankets have been issued. Food is provided in drums once every two days – maize meal porridge and beans of a type used for feeding cattle.

Kenneth was held there for eight days before he and 18 others were moved to the smaller camp, where he claims they were tortured. 'Mostly the torture was done by soldiers. The CIO [Central Intelligence Organisation] said, "Take him. When he's ready bring him back." Sometimes they tied us by the arms to trees and hit us with sticks.' Kenneth claims that detainees had pieces of barbed wire tied to their genitals. According to a separate report from Khami prison near Bulawayo one detainee, Skinford Bhebe, was castrated during interrogation.

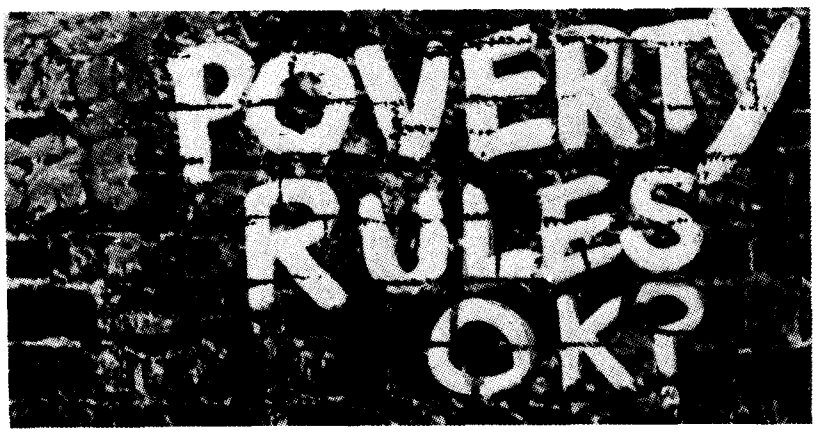
In this smaller camp were some 300 young men – members of the army, demobilised guerrillas or civilians suspected of 'dissident' activity. While Kenneth was there, both camps were run by the Task Force, which has its headquarters at the former Rhodesian Fire Force camp at Tsholotsho. The Task Force was set up under the command of Colonel Lionel Dyke, head of the parachute regiment and a former member of Rhodesia's notorious Selous Scouts. It was made up of about 1,000 personnel from ex-Rhodesian units: Rhodesian African Rifles, Rhodesian Light Infantry, Police Anti-Terrorist Unit (now called Police Support Unit), CIO and military intelligence. Technically the Task Force was withdrawn from Matabeleland in early December, when the situation seemed to have calmed down. Now, a force of some 5,000 has been sent back under Dyke's command.

THE STRIKING THING about the Task Force is the absence of former liberation fighters. The much publicised British supervised integration process which was supposed to have created the integrated Zimbabwe National Army has largely failed. A number of units have broken down in violent faction fights. Some 5,000 personnel have deserted, many to join the dissidents – not just from ZIPRA but from Mugabe's own ZANLA guerrillas too. In November, the officer commanding 1:7 battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Ndlovu, was executed with his deputy and a number of other senior officers have been arrested – Lookout Masuku himself had been deputy army commander. Mugabe's only reliable troops are the Rhodesians.

Apart from the atrocities at Tsholotsho, the Task Force has been responsible for beatings and public executions in the villages. Millions of television viewers witnessed one beating when Philip Hayton and a BBC crew accompanied a Task Force unit last year. It was that incident which got journalists excluded from the area.

An eyewitness to one public execution at a village in Tsholotsho District says that the Task Force rounded everyone up with threats and beatings. 'The soldiers beat us and hit us and threatened us in a terrible way. They accused us of feeding dissidents. They hit one old woman and said that she was a mother of dissidents. Then the white soldier picked one boy and asked him what he was going to say. He said he knew nothing to say about dissidents. The white soldier took his gun from his belt and just shot the boy in the head.'

All this happened *before* the post-Christmas violence which has so far claimed at least 14 lives. The brutality of the guerrillas may be indefensible; it may also be politically counter-productive. But set against the brutality of the security forces it becomes rather more understandable. □



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BRETECHER

THE SUCKERS

I want a present
oh don't start
you know very well that I don't approve of presents
fuck that, I want a present
I've tried to explain a hundred times giving a present is like buying someone, wanting to exert power over them
I want a present
I'm sorry but I won't go along with this sentimental blackmail
look I don't give a shit for your justifications
but you don't understand. your demands are infantile, it's a sort of anal regression
I want a present
look, it's not my fault if you're still into some sort of sado-maso subservience thing
but if I'm giving you one too...
no, that's out I certainly don't want a present. I don't need to be reassured. So just don't give me anything I warn you
you're getting one whether you want it or not. and it's a good one too
and I want one back, even a little one, I don't mind
but I don't know what to give you when you want something you go out and buy it
that doesn't mean anything
so where are we now? we each spend money on rubbish when we could do something intelligent with it
so, who cares?
OK, OK, I'm a sucker. Tell me what you want and let's get it over with
I want a surprise
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Sex and social change

Jon Cook, University of East Anglia, Norwich

I'm not convinced by Jeff Nuttall's claim (Letters 14 Jan.) that there is a major error in my article 'Sex and socialism'. He assumes what has to be proved, and that is that the movement he cites was a major movement of social change. What have been its effects? How has it advanced or protected the interests of exploited groups? If Sixties libertarianism challenged a sexual authority, has this gone hand in hand with a sustained challenge to political authority? It may be too early to answer these questions, but at first sight it looks as though the sexual revolution of the Sixties has been readily assimilated into the relations of capitalism. The pursuit of an 'unrepressed' sexual pleasure has been transformed into a thoroughly unsubversive consumerism.

The more important point is, of course, that a major movement for social change, the contemporary woman's movement, grew in part out of a critique of the libertarianism of Rubin, Hoffman, et al. Women saw that the rhetoric of sexual freedom was often, in practice, an advocacy of men's sexual pleasure, one oblivious to women's definitions. Jeff Nuttall's demand that radical politics be 'motivated by a libertarian determination to eroticise economics, politics and culture' sounds fine, but it assumes a consensus about the erotic which is now very much in question.

Gregory Wale, Luton, Beds.

Sexuality is an important issue. And also a political issue, inasmuch as we recognise the need for change – and equally the possibility of change. Jon Cook's article provided a welcome entry into the debate. I feel too that he is on the right track, up to a point.

Boys and young men do take their cues on sexuality from whatever material they can get hold of, which is often surreptitiously studied copies of 'girlie' magazines. I think, however, that the nature of the sexual code portrayed in these magazines is rather different from the interpretation offered by Cook. Rather than the sadistic violation of women which he imagines, the usual fantasy portrayed *does* recognise women as 'beings with desire and sexual need'. In fact, it is such a recognition which produces the potency of the fantasy – for it is in the arousal of this desire that a man may 'score'. In this scenario, it is the woman's 'orgasm per hour' quotient which is all-important. The more orgasms, the more successful the man is deemed to be.

I feel that it is only with the recognition of women as fellow human beings, not sexual pinball machines, that truly caring, friendly, and above all, happy, sexual relations can occur. The more general political results of this realisation could be pretty staggering too.

Land for the people

John Bradbrook, Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA), London W1

It was encouraging to read Tim Beaumont's article (*NS* 7 Jan). Clearly, both the production of food and the preservation of a diverse rural environment as a place to live and work are matters of the greatest importance.

As Tim Beaumont wrote, the capitalist form of social relations is not conducive to sound sustainable agricultural practice. In this respect feudalism was preferable for there was then at least a sense of the land being held in trust for future generations.

In these capitalist times, land has become just another commodity to be bought and sold, a good bet for speculators as its finite nature is likely to ensure its real value will continue to rise. It has also meant that financial institutions, which have no real interest in agriculture, now own large tracts of land. The resulting emphasis on short-term return on capital leads to a policy of crop maximisation, regardless of the consequences for the countryside, for wildlife and the long-term health of the soil. The capitalist mentality in agriculture has led to a dangerous reliance on high inputs of energy, chemical fertilisers and pesticides – all finite resources – which is not sustainable in the long term.

The stock socialist response to the land question is nationalisation. Yet faced with a choice between nationalisation on the CEGB model and the capitalist status quo, most people, and especially those living in rural areas, would opt for the devil they know.

In March this year a new organisation, the Socialist Countryside Group, will be launched, which will attempt, among other things, to grapple with the land question from a socialist point of view. We will be looking at alternatives to centralised bureaucratic nationalisation. This could involve examining the possibilities of extending municipal and co-operative ownership of land, encouraging smallholdings, extending planning controls to the countryside and improving the research and development of organic methods of farming.

For further information, write to the Socialist Countryside Group, c/o SERA, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

Irish questions

Tom Paulin, University of Nottingham

In his review of John Bowman's *De Valera and the Ulster Question* (*NS* 14 Jan.) Bernard Crick wanders off into the following remark: 'Unless we are rabid "map nationalists", much more should be said in praise of the creation of a stable, decent, modern Ireland and a bit less about the tragedy of Dev dying before partition ended. As for social justice in the North, that is another question – as John Hume once knew'.

Professor Crick isn't always the most lucid of prose stylists, but perhaps he could explain what he means by this reference to John Hume? Hume is a courageous politician and surely deserves Crick's support?

Greenham's uncommon women

Margaret Doncaster, Tavistock, Devon

I was one of the many older women who went to Greenham. Like Judith Cook (Letters 14 Jan.), I know it was different, but it reminded me of one other occasion, 'WOMEN WALK HOME', in Cyprus, a peaceful walk of 30,000 women, who went with representatives of many nations, to sit and look down at their homes from which they had been driven by the invading Turkish Army. These were women who had never taken part in any political action in their lives, who came in trepidation against their husbands' wishes. The only sound that day was the sound of weeping. We faced soldiers, barbed wire and minefields. Silently in twos, women went forward to ask the officers guarding the line to be allowed to go home.

The men were not allowed to be there, because they would have represented war, or a threat to the armies watching. Greenham for me, as I joined hands round that monstrous site, was an echo of WOMEN WALK HOME and a memory of all my life. As I lit a little candle in the dark, it was for the women of the world, for my grandchildren, for survivors like me in Spain, Leningrad, Dresden, Hiroshima, Cyprus, Lebanon. The list is endless.

This morning on the radio, I listened to the voice of an American soldier, practising for the moment he would turn the switch and release a nuclear missile, saying he would do it on command, without thought for the implications, then go home and play with his children. This is the voice of rational man; we are naive women.

Sizewell inquiry

R. D. Anthony, HM Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations, Health & Safety Executive, London SW1

In your article 'Nuclear power's uncertain future' (*NS* 7 Jan.), under the section 'Sizewell – the players', you list the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) as one of the applicants in the inquiry. This is incorrect.

Like the National Radiological Protection Board and the Ergonomics Society, the NII is an independent witness to the inquiry. It is important that your readers understand the special role of the Inspectorate which is to give its views as licensing authority on the safety features relevant to the design, construction and operation of the station.

The Inspectorate is neither for nor against the proposal for a PWR at Sizewell.

Auto-destruction?

Don Milligan, London E5

Miscellany (*NS* 14 Jan) awarded the 1982 prize for intellectual rigour to the Revolutionary Gay Men's Caucus. We won the prize because of the thorough-going quality of the analysis set out in our 'Final Resolution' dissolving the organisation. As a former member of the RGMC I should like to gratefully accept the award on behalf of all of our comrades.

Our dissolution marks not the end of 'the story' but a theoretical and practical advance in the struggle against the oppression of homosexual workers. Our decision to take a full part in the work of building the Revolutionary Communist Party and the fight for working-class interests is a development of great significance for the future of the gay movement.

The 'autonomous' politics of the left in the gay movement is fuelled by rather meagre amounts of quango money, and sustained by a combination of Labour Party membership and a grudging regard for the interests of the proprietors of the gay scene. These 'autonomous' politics are of course not autonomous. Dazzled by the kaleidoscope of competing oppressions, the gay movement is unable to defend or advance the interests of ordinary homosexual workers.

In settling for a haggle with the Labour Party over the age of consent, a few shared jobs and a spot of positive discrimination, the gay left is compelled to abandon the struggle for equal rights and forget about liberation altogether. The dissolution of the RGMC and our work with the Revolutionary Communist Party was prompted by the recognition that only politics unequivocally founded on the interests of the working class will prove adequate in the struggle against our oppression.

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Christopher Hill

Moving heaven and earth

The Life of John Milton
A. N. WILSON *Oxford* £9.95

There have been so many books on Milton that our first question must be, what compelling reason had the author to produce yet another? The answer is not immediately obvious. Mr Wilson, author of a successful biography of Sir Walter Scott, has read Milton carefully. He writes jauntily, describing the poet as 'a crashing snob', 'the most beautiful of capitalism's first-fruits', '*Paradise Lost* could not have been written if he had not been a capitalist.' (The reference is to Milton's inheritance from his father.) Mr Wilson is sensible about Milton's attitude towards women, and in particular towards his daughters. Robert Graves's slanders are refuted again; which will not stop them being repeated. Mr Wilson argues that Milton's journey to Italy in 1638-9 was important in making him aware of the horrors of ecclesiastical tyranny. There may be something in this, but it ignores the possibility that it was Milton's pre-existing radical views which made him so surprisingly successful with Italian liberal intellectuals.

Mr Wilson reminds us pertinently of protestantism's respectful attitude towards poetry, and of Milton's devotion to Spenser. He stresses the fundamentally protestant proposition that 'orthodoxy is itself an alien concept to the free Christian', and illustrates from the poems that Milton had no 'warmth of feeling about the person of Christ', playing down the atonement. Milton, it is suggested, was 'so detached from the Christian religion . . . that he could use its central stories as mythologies'. Mr Milner's recent Marxist study, *John Milton and the English Revolution*, had a similar argument. Mr Wilson says fresh and interesting things about *Comus* and *Lycidas*. I disagree with his interpretation of *Samson Agonistes* as a 'spiritual autobiography', 'Milton's *Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*'; but there are advantages in ignoring currently fashionable theories which see it as a tragedy of failure.

Dealing with Milton's private life is easy, since the facts are all laid out in French's five-volume *Life Records* and Parker's massive biography, reliable on facts if occasionally eccentric in interpretation. Even so Mr Wilson lapses rather too frequently into 'one can imagine . . .'; 'it must have been . . .'. When he faces Milton's political career he begins to stumble. Factual errors abound: Laud Bishop of London ten years too early (this may charitably be blamed on the printer); Edward Hyde credited with carrying the Great Seal from London to York in 1642; the Rump of the Long Parliament restored in 1660 rather than in May 1659. Milton's admirer Mrs Attaway is described as a 'Griddletonian' – a sect of Mr Wilson's invention. He may have had in mind the Grindletonians, found in Yorkshire 20-30 years earlier; but no evidence connects Mrs Attaway with them or with Yorkshire. The Clarendon Code is not evidence of 'a Parliament and a country more obsessed by religion' in the 1660s, but of one party taking political vengeance on its defeated rivals. To speak of 'the papist bias of the Yale edition of Milton's works' (of his prose, actually) will shock any who have used it or who knew the liberal agnostic Jewish scholar who was its principal editor.

Equally serious are howlers about the civil war and Oliver Cromwell. 'Men were at arms', Mr Wilson suggests, in order to coerce Charles I into accepting a series of limitations on his power; but the King had in fact accepted every one of those which Mr Wilson lists before war started. Both parts of the descripion of Cromwell as 'a slightly batty country squire, brilliant in the organisation of land' will surprise historians. So will Oliver as 'an absolutist ruler' after a 'seizure of absolute power' in April 1653. Worse is the author's use of a royalist propaganda rag to suggest not only that Cromwell bored a Huntingdon clergyman's tongue with a hot iron but also that 'Cromwell's torturing of an aged clergyman seemed to Milton a certain sign that God was revealing himself, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen'. Later Milton 'came to see . . . that Cromwell was a tyrant and a thug', with his own 'KGB'. All these statements are false and ridiculous.

They derive, I fear, from an ideological distaste for revolutions in which 'malcontents, maniacs and murderers' always have 'as powerful a voice as the men of reason'. We may applaud Mr Wilson's disapproval of 'modern dictatorships' in which 'people . . . living quiet lives . . . are the first to be labelled as dissidents and whisked off to prison'. But it is abusing historical hindsight

Mary Evans Picture Library

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to suggest that this has anything to do with Milton. Mr Wilson's own aesthetic contempt for political commitment makes him want to deny it to the poet. He does not discuss the political ideas, with their deep protestant roots, to which Milton devoted so much thought and labour; nor his desperate attempts in 1659-60 to win agreement among supporters of the Good Old Cause against a restoration of monarchy. Interesting on the role of London in the poet's life, Mr Wilson has nothing good to say of the ferment of radical ideas there which Milton hailed in *Areopagitica*. (He sees *Areopagitica* indeed as a combination of eloquent rhetoric and logical serenity with 'the most ludicrous superstitious rant, . . . lunatic jingoism'). He speaks of 'the Independents, the Ranters, the Quakers, the Brownists, the Muggletonians and the horde of other crackpots which the civil broils seemed to be throwing up'. (The first and fourth of these sects had been 'thrown up' decades earlier; the other three appeared years later.)

COOLNESS towards Milton's religious and political commitment goes with failure to appreciate the importance of millennarianism for the Parliamentarian revolutionaries – Presbyterians and Independents no less than sectaries. Much excellent work has been published on this in the last decade, of which Mr Wilson is apparently unaware. Milton hailed Christ as 'shortly-expected King', thinking perhaps of 1650-56 as the date for his coming, one favoured by scholarly experts. Our hindsight knowledge that Christ did not appear then, and the subsequent cranky associations of millennarianism, make it easy to underestimate the significance of a belief which motivated regicides and Quakers as well as Milton.

The poet believed that the achievements of the English Revolution were 'the most heroic and exemplary . . . since the foundation of the world' – a statement far too committed to be ignored. Milton risked his life (and *Paradise Lost*) defending these achievements, and spent his last 20 years trying to justify God's ways to men after God appeared to have betrayed his own Cause.

The idea that 'Jehovah was intimately interested in English politics' strikes Mr Wilson as 'quaint'. Alas, by 20th-century standards 17th-century England *was* quaint. This unhistorical approach to the later Milton is a pity, because some of Mr Wilson's comments on the early poems are perceptive. But the last great poems elude him. He thinks that in *Paradise Lost* 'the earthly gave place to the celestial', and that 'a large part of Milton's purpose' was 'to create the physical reality of the angel kingdoms'. *Samson Agonistes* was Milton's attempt to reassure himself that he had kept his hands clean. The result is to trivialise the great revolutionary poet whom Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley revered. Milton was neither 'a passionate capitalist' nor an aesthete who unfortunately got caught up in dirty politics. For him the English Revolution was God's Cause. This conviction was central to his life, and therefore to his poetry. □

LITERATURE
Paul Binding

Touchstones

Outsiders: A Study in Life and Letters
HANS MAYER *MIT* £24.50

'The bourgeois Enlightenment has failed': this is the 'contention' and the business of Hans Mayer's brilliant, provocative and untidy work of socio-literary criticism. By this he means in fact: 'Bourgeois Enlightenment as a society's hegemonic ideal has been proved insufficient.' For, of course, the Britain, France, Germany and Austria of the last 200 years – the societies to whose cultures Mayer applies himself – cannot sensibly be viewed as thorough, organic expressions of Enlightenment. And with the one nation whose foundation was the Enlightenment's child, the United States of America, the author is only occasionally and perfunctorily concerned.

There is, Mayer holds, threefold proof of this failure – in the attitudes of these societies to the aggressive element in women (here given the epithet 'Judith' after Holofernes's noble murderess, from whom both artists and their publics have down the centuries recoiled), to homosexuals and to Jews: to 'intentional and existential outsiders'. The most terrible vindication of this vision of failure is to be found – it need hardly be said – in what happened after the eruption of Fascism in *soi-disant* enlightened countries: the enforced reduction of women to the status of soothers of warriors, the imprisonment and extermination of homosexuals and Jews in the concentration camps. These fates, however, can, according to Mayer, legitimately be regarded as one logical conclusion of the relationship between capitalist, comfort-orientated societies in the previous century and their nonconformists. A harmonious burgher community simply cannot accommodate the armed woman, the libidinously heterodox, the person whose atavistic allegiances transcend immediate place of residence. And to the outsiders also, accommodation must be ultimately unthinkable, however desperately some may desire it, for it will inevitably entail loss of identity.

Despite the subtitle 'A Study in Life and Letters', Hans Mayer really occupies himself only with the latter, though in such a way that the reader is continually stimulated into hard thinking about the former. Mayer's choice of texts is wide-ranging and – perhaps because of the book's origin in individual essays – eclectic, which is to the author's intellectual advantage. He has a lot to say about woman as hetaira and vamp in 19th- and early 20th-century literatures (he is particularly good on Wedekind and his Lulu); he is diffident, however, in discussion of that key figure of 19th-century fiction, the woman who lets her sexual passion endanger her societal inclusion: Hetty Sorrel, Anna Karenina, Effi Briest, Emma Bovary, Tess.

The section on homosexuality – lively, scholarly and contentious though it is – also suffers from Mayer's exclusions. The question of homosexuality stands at the centre of Mayer's thesis. The armed woman is demonstrating her society's culpably inadequate definition of femalehood; however, other aspects of this, found more socially palatable, are not automatically denied. Jews are born heirs to a culture which of its very nature cannot accept assimilation. Yet an ideological truce, an uneasy coexistence can be imagined, since in other basic respects the life of an ordinary Jew differs not one whit from a Gentile's. But the man who elects to perform the sexual act only with another man is a subversive in a special and profound sense, since his behaviour contradicts the conjunction of coupling and procreation inherent in heterosexual activity, a conjunction at the very foundation of *any* society. Gide may have pointed out, in *Corydon*, that the animal kingdom is rife with homosexuality; bourgeois communities have preferred to regard the practice with hatred and fear. These emotions have been arrogated by the 'deviants' unto themselves. Mayer – who in this section fuses biography and literary analysis to a degree that he does not elsewhere – devotes himself to the murdered Winckelmann, the shot-at Rimbaud, the executed Maurice Sachs, the suicides Tchaikowsky and Klaus Mann, the devil's advocate Jean Genet masturbating over the beauties of a guillotined murderer and a sadistic militiaman. No more than Shylock could these men renounce not just their tastes but the concomitant eccentric ecstasies and miseries without ceasing to be who they were/are.

But what of Whitman, Carpenter, Forster? Just as Mayer had almost nothing to say about the fictional ancestresses of the liberated woman, so he has nothing to say about these architects of contemporary homosexual freedom. What about Lorca? He was in no possible sense a son of the Enlightenment; his art, which is profoundly homosexual, is at once joyous and bravely exploratory of the realities of pain and death. Yet Mayer mentions him once only, and inaptly – in a long list of homosexuals who apparently desired death.

In one sense, for all Mayer's formidable learning and powers of exegesis, his book rests on a simplistic premise. No one, or almost no one, among today's bourgeois liberals believes in either the possibility or the desirability of the sort of burgher utopia that he derides. At the same time no one can afford to dismiss the achievements of the Enlightenment, and of first-wave Romanticism, for out of them have come some of the most desirable and precious elements in contemporary society. Elements moreover which are always under threat for precisely the reasons Mayer so ably diagnoses. But the fact is that today in Britain and France and West Germany, as never before, and perhaps to a sadly limited extent, women can publicly acknowledge their sexuality and can give

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creative expression to aggressive instincts, men can make love to other men (and for that matter women to other women), and there is in the air, in places, a healthily troubled honesty about the conflicts entailed in the confrontation of groups with atavistic loyalties and the prevalent secular culture.

To say this is not to be guilty of sentimentality or meliorism. Mayer, who emerges from his study as a compassionate and contemplative man, has spent important years of his life in East Germany, and like so many dissidents is infected by a curious compound of desire for absolutism and desire for perpetual warfare, desires learned in the society escaped from.

Nevertheless Mayer's last sentences are quotations from Goethe:

> One does not do well to remain too long in the abstract. The esoteric only harms by its inclination to become exoteric. Life is best instructed through living beings.

And indeed respect for the complexity of the individual person is stamped upon every page of this book, which raises disturbing questions about matters too glibly assimilated into the intellectual life of our post-Enlightenment society. □

HISTORY
John Keegan

Leicester lad

A Soldier's View of Empire: The Reminiscences of James Bodell 1831-92
ed. KEITH SINCLAIR *Bodley Head* £7.95

This is really a very remarkable document – original, informative and, in parts, deeply moving. James Bodell was a Leicester lad who joined the army in the 1830s, suffered Tommy Atkins's hardships, took his discharge in Hong Kong and then made a new life – or several lives – in Tasmania and Australia. He was born poor and died rich, a respected member of one of those settler communities in which Dickens showed Mr Micawber at last turning up trumps. Dickens is much criticised for flaws of characterisation, and the transformation of Mr Micawber is generally held up as an example of a character changing his spots in the teeth of the reader's credulity. But in many ways Bodell is a Mr Micawber and his story both vindicates Dickens and imputes a narrow parochialism to conventional literary critics.

Mr Micawber, however, was shabby-genteel. And that James Bodell certainly was not. Indeed he originated in E. P. Thompson country, a working-class boy with his whole world to make. Enlistment in the old long-service army was usually taken as a token of defeat – the mother of the future Field-Marshal Wully Robertson wrote on news of his abandoning a footman's position for the ranks, 'I would rather see you buried than in a red coat.' But Bodell enlisted with his eyes open and made the most of every opportunity the army put his way. His portrayal of the army is therefore a fascinating one, and quite at variance with that commonly held. He makes it clear that officers, if properly approached by a private soldier, were perfectly ready to treat him as a fellow human being; and, if outfaced when requiring some non-regulation duty, would concede defeat without rancour. He saw a soldier flogged in his first days of service; but, comparing the experience with another aboard ship later on, remarked that military floggings were nothing like as severe as those naval discipline meted out. There were heartbreaks, of course; officers turned a blind eye to wives 'off the strength' who nevertheless managed to smuggle themselves aboard troop trains within the United Kingdom; but humanity did not function when a regiment was ordered abroad. His account of the separation of soldiers and wives at the quayside when the 59th sailed for China in 1849 is heart-rending. 'I forgot to mention several men deserted and one man shot himself in Cork Barracks before they would leave their wives and families'.

He himself was reduced to tears when forbidden to take his discharge in Hong Kong by his colonel; 'I was so much hurt by this refusal that I went into a bathroom and had a good cry'. A thoroughly Victorian thing to do; but, when he had dried his tears, he found the courage to beard the general, shop his colonel and get away with it.

Next stop Tasmania, and later Australia and New Zealand. His object was to make his fortune. And though drink – one forgets that it really was a curse in the 19th century – several times set him back, driving him to enlist once more in one or another of the volunteer corps with which the white man beat down his black or brown brother, he always bobbed back to the surface. In 1883, 35½ years after leaving Leicester as a recruit, he returned from New Zealand a prosperous and successful trader. He found his parents still alive and his 'fine sisters and their families' in 'I am glad to say . . . very fair circumstances'. Indeed 'all Places visited had improved most wonderful and the conditions of the Working Classes had improved in a wonderful manner, better housed better clothed and had more money than in my day'.

So Bodell's memoirs are not just for the military historian. They will interest anyone concerned with British colonisation in the Victorian age or with the fortunes of the English working class. One had always suspected that there was more to that than satanic mills; why else the enthusiasm with which the young bourgeois marrieds snap up Victorian artisans' cottages as a first step towards Weybridge or Sunningdale? Perhaps Professor Sinclair, who has edited these heart-on-the-sleeve memoirs with perfect sensitivity, will now embark on a re-interpretation of the making of the English working class. □

LITERATURE
James Campbell

In two minds

Scott and Scotland
EDWIN MUIR *Polygon* £5.95

This short book has been much discussed, and its arguments occasionally misunderstood, in Scotland. Yet this is the first time it has been reissued since its original publication in 1936 as part of a series called 'The Voice of Scotland', in which several writers were given a figure or topic and asked to discuss what he, she or it had done for Scotland. The figure allotted to Edwin Muir was Sir Walter Scott, but the result was less a study of the novelist than a series of interconnected essays on Scottish language and literature, with particular reference to that literature's greatest genius, in an attempt to explain what Muir felt to be 'a very curious emptiness' behind his work.

Muir's argument was that the development of Scottish literature had been interrupted at crucial stages by the nation's religious and political troubles, namely, the Reformation, the Union of the Crowns and the Union of the Parliaments. As a result of these major events, Scots gradually lost faith in their native dialect and its status as a language for literature was devalued. Yet English, the language of the adoptive parents, never quite entered Scots' hearts as it may have entered their heads. Consequently, according to Muir, Scots 'feel in one language and think in another', which prevented the further development of 'a high culture of the feelings as well as of the mind'. Burns (who made his way in the world speaking English though he wrote in Scots) was a product of this split, and so, in a different way, was Scott. Its influence lasted into Muir's day, and indeed to our own, and it is what led him to sub-title his book 'The Predicament of the Scottish Writer'. It is this aspect of the book, more than the comments it contains about Scott, which will interest readers today.

That great poetry, and a small amount of prose, has been written in Scots does nothing to affect Muir's case – it was something he gladly acknowledged – and in this respect the grounds for quarrel between Muir and MacDiarmid, the leading figure of the Scottish Renaissance which Muir was attacking, were exaggerated. Not for a minute did Muir dispute MacDiarmid's genius, nor the worth of many of his poems which, though written in a synthetic dialect, nevertheless *felt* like an authentic expression of a Scots consciousness. Muir's main objection went beyond that: he suggested that since this language was not one for speaking and thinking, therefore the 'whole man' could not find expression in it. It was, bluntly, a dead end.

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If this argument is drawn to its conclusion, then the early lyrics of Hugh MacDiarmid must be predicted to have no lasting influence on Scottish literature of the future, their intrinsic beauty notwithstanding. No one can say with certainty that that will be the case, but so far no poet has emerged who has developed (rather than aped) MacDiarmid's achievement.

For all Muir's persuasive demonstrations, for all the pleasure I get from his wonderfully lucid prose, one objection remains. In the case of poets who have developed a form of Scots (even if only as a literary language) their writing in English is almost invariably inferior to what they do in Scots. This is true not only of Burns, Fergusson and, surprisingly, Scott, but in our own day of Robert Garioch, whose Edinburgh dialect strikes the ear as something at once familiar and authentic (as it is) and in that sense leads the reader into areas of feeling not available to English. If MacDiarmid and Muir may be said to have diverged at this point, the one believing that that vigour must be cultivated, the other recognising it but asking that it be sacrificed in aid of the redevelopment of an 'organic' literature, then the number and complexity of the difficulties surrounding this question begin, I hope, to be apparent. Muir himself had no definite answer, but could say only, 'Look to the Irish example'.

Scott and Scotland (it comes with an excellent, combative introduction by Allan Massie) is the fifth of Muir's prose works to be republished within the last four years. Its chief importance is for the light it sheds on a vexed question belonging to a nation whose confusions too often cause inarticulacy. □

COLD WAR
Barry Cohen

Three-way

Superpowers in Collision: The New Cold War
NOAM CHOMSKY, JONATHAN STEELE & JOHN GITTINGS
Penguin £1.95

In his introduction to this short but essential work, John Gittings remarks that the British 'are less well informed about foreign affairs than on any other aspect of government policy'. The precise reasons why this situation exists merit a separate volume. Nevertheless, foreign observers of British political life have generally been amazed at how the governing classes have uniquely managed to cultivate a defiant provincialism – despite a legacy of responsibility for ruling half of the globe.

Britain's inexorable post-war retreat from the world may actually have slowed down since Americans elected a President who appears determined to drag the rest of us to the nuclear abyss. As Gittings correctly points out, 'the new cold war of the 1980s is much more threatening than the old cold war of the 1950s. Not only has the size of the nuclear arsenals held by the superpowers vastly increased, but nuclear war has begun to be seen as fightable and winnable by strategists on both sides.'

Only a few years ago, there was general agreement that international politics were characterised by the process of *détente* between the US and the Soviet Union. Attention shifted to the Third World. OPEC flexed its muscles and growled like a tiger while the industrialised nations trembled in fear that 'the wretched of the earth' had finally arrived to sit at the banquet table. At the end of the 1970s, when the post-war boom had finally run its course, the Brandt Report attempted to convince us that a more equitable distribution of global wealth might truly be our economic salvation.

The inclusion of Noam Chomsky in a volume with the Penguin imprint does reassure us that liberalism survives in our public life. In his own country, Chomsky's political writings are now confined to the radical press. Since the end of the Vietnam War, American liberal publications have collectively and successfully ensured that one of America's brightest and most interesting left-wing writers is denied a wider audience.

Chomsky argues that, behind the ideological rationalisations and propaganda battles of the American media's discussion of foreign policy, 'the fundamental conceptual apparatus remains constant for foreign policy throughout the period since the Second World War'. Since the structure of power and the institutions which perpetuate it have remained unchanged, policy shifts and personnel changes have been essentially only 'tactical assessments as to how to achieve major goals'.

THE roots of American policy can be traced back to the early 1940s when American planners developed the concept of Grand Area Planning. This geo-political analysis determined that the US must strive for the maximum opening of the global arena to American capital in its inevitable quest for markets, opportunities for investment, repatriation of profits and access to fuels and natural resources.

The crushing of the anti-Nazi resistance in Greece and the restoration of a conservative order there provided the first successful post-war model for maintaining American hegemony abroad. In order to mobilise the American people, who were eager for peace and consumer goods, the ideological underpinnings for what came to be known as the Cold War had to be solidly constructed. Hence, the intellectual mandarins fulfilled their duty to the state by successfully convincing their countrymen that no effort should be spared to push back their expansionist arch-enemy, the Soviet Union.

Chomsky believes that future US strategy in the Third World will be based on the speedy deployment of massive firepower abroad combined with heavy repression against dissident forces at home. However, the importance which he attaches to the El Salvador issue is somewhat exaggerated. Although the outcome of the leftist challenge to the American dominance in Central America is crucial, it appears highly unlikely (although not inconceivable) that domestic

Dennis O'Driscoll

G-Plan Angst

He has everything.
A beautiful young wife.
A comfortable home.
A secure job.
A velvet three-piece suite.
A metallic-silver car.
A mahogany cocktail cabinet.
A rugby trophy.
A remote-controlled music centre.
A set of golf clubs under the hallstand.
A fair-haired daughter learning to walk.

What he is afraid of most
and what keeps him tossing some nights
on the electric underblanket,
listening to the antique clock
clicking as if with disapproval from the landing,
are the stories that begin:
'He had everything.
A beautiful young wife.
A comfortable home.
A secure job.
Then one day.'

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as well as international opinion would tolerate large-scale, direct American intervention in El Salvador. That reality reflects how far objective conditions have changed since the period when American power operated virtually unimpeded.

AS FORMER *Guardian* correspondent in Washington and Moscow, Jonathan Steele is strategically located to provide a cogent and level account of the Soviet Union's place in the post-war balance of power. The focus of his analysis is the rise and decline of the process of *détente*.

Russia's attainment by 1969 of nuclear parity with the US forced American leaders to reassess their global management techniques. After decades of isolation and hostility, parity held enormous psychological value for the Soviet leadership. Initially, 'Washington and Moscow had remarkably similar views of *détente*. Both saw it as a device for reinforcing the status quo and pressing the other to act predictably.'

The system began to falter, however, when unresolved ambiguities arose over the limits of *détente*. For Nixon and Kissinger, Moscow was entitled to the benefits of *détente* only if it showed 'restraint' in its international behaviour. Rejecting this concept of 'linkage' as an American device to exclude them from the Third World, Soviet leaders continued to assert their right to support their own friends and allies in their pursuit of global influence.

Although *détente* had already begun to falter during the early days of the Carter administration, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan provided the most obvious excuse for the Western revival of traditional Cold War politics. Under Reagan, Steele predicts, the American disenchantment with *détente* will accelerate, transforming every regional conflict into an East-West confrontation. Harbouring no illusions that a nuclear war can be won, the Soviet leadership will remain committed to *détente*.

Despite post-Maoist China's relative normalisation of its international relations, it still retains many features of a Third World, developing nation. Although its ambitious modernisation programme aims to propel it into the 21st century, John Gittings is convinced that it remains 'half a superpower'.

Mao's major contribution to China's world outlook consisted of 'coming to terms with the imposition of the outside world, and in working out an effective means of dealing with it'. In practical terms, this meant that China had to manoeuvre for space in the face of much hostility from its more powerful rivals.

The American rapprochement with China was supposedly based on the desire to achieve 'some comparability in Washington's relations with both Moscow and Peking'. Gittings argues that the US strategy was simply a continuation of an old policy to divide China and the Soviet Union. Gittings believes that, if there is to be a more stable world order, it will be China's task to seek 'at least some equivalence in its relations with both superpowers'. □

FICTION

Harriett Gilbert

Making it

Pictures of Fidelman
BERNARD MALAMUD *Chatto* £8.50
Bech is Back
JOHN UPDIKE *Deutsch* £6.95
Up Above the World
PAUL BOWLES *Peter Owen* £7.95

Bernard Malamud's **Pictures of Fidelman** is, in effect, like one of those series entitled 'The Stations of the Cross', with Arthur Fidelman, 'a self-confessed failure as a painter', stumbling and crawling to his crucifixion bearing the Creative Imperative. Fidelman is an expatriate Jewish American. The first tableau shows his arrival in Rome (with a suitcase borrowed from his sister Bessie) to set to work on a critical study of Giotto. But the academic pursuit of knowledge is not what Fidelman is all about. When Chapter One of his manuscript is stolen, he is not so much concerned with the problems of re-creating his arguments, of re-researching his facts, but with finding the physical object *that he had made*. When he learns that the chapter's been burnt, he appears to accept his fate – seventh-rate though he knows it to be, he will have to resume his painting.

The ensuing tableaux depict a succession of Fidelman humiliations – at the hands of a woman painter, who despises both his art and his erections; at the fists of a gangster who forces him to copy a painting by somebody *else*. When others are not degrading him, Fidelman degrades himself – cheating; arse-licking; cringing; moaning; scrounging off poor old Bessie back home. After all, you can't be a 'nice human being' as well as a 'dedicated artist'.

Malamud is ingenious. To have draped round such sloping, ignoble shoulders his thesis on creativity gives it a paradoxical stature and weight. The urge to make – to shape, to control – is not confined to those set apart as artists. However suppressed or perverted, however much in conflict with our own best interests, it is part of everyone's psyche. With wit and imaginative vision, the author explores the destruction that creation entails.

Malamud's hero is a figure of relentless mediocrity. His story is told in a prose stripped back to the bone. Whether being more-or-less 'realistic', or splintering into staccato abstractions, it is never less than controlled, economical, direct. But a sense of depth and fullness grows as the placing of sentences, concepts and jokes builds to a narrative frieze of astonishing power. In the final picture, Fidelman (to please his current lover, Beppo) turns to commercial glass-blowing – making Disney animals for the tourists. Begged by Beppo's wife to leave, he blows one beautiful, 'artistic' bowl as a goodbye present for his friend:

> He showed the bowl to Beppo, who said it was a good job, beautifully proportioned and reminding him of something the old Greeks had done. I kept my finger in art, Fidelman wept when he was alone.

The bowl, of course, gets stolen. The novel ends: 'Fidelman sailed from Venice on a Portuguese freighter. In America he worked as a craftsman in glass and loved men and women.' So finally he gives up and finds peace? Neither the reader nor, I suspect, the author can seriously believe so.

Bech is Back takes a more familiar, parochial look at creativity. Here, it is the personal province of that troubled genius Henry Bech, whose abuse at the hands of reviewers, academics and, above all, women, was first revealed in *Bech: A Book* in 1970. Not to be confused with his creator John Updike (and certainly not with Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, or even a mixture of all three), Bech is a New York Jewish novelist of small but impressive output, great emotional integrity and complex, fascinating doubts. Should he, for instance, call his next novel *Easy Money* or *Think Big*? The doubts, in fact, are hypothetical, since Bech is suffering from one of the longest writer's blocks on record – he had it in 1970; as the new book opens, he has it still – and earns his living on the lecture circuit, or representing American Culture abroad.

But enter Beatrice Latchett, the homelier sister of Bech's ex-mistress Norma and, it transpires, an irresistible Muse:

> 'What you must do', Bea told him, even as her blue Scots eyes slid sideways toward some other detail of housekeeping, 'is go up there first thing every day and write a certain number of pages . . . Do that number, Henry, good or bad, summer or winter, and see what happens.' 'Good or bad?' he asked, incredulous. 'Sure, why not? Who can tell anyway, in the end?'

The question is, can Updike? Does he know how pretentious his creation can be? There is no denying that Updike is skilled at his craft, and when the book satirises literary life it is both acute and amusing. But when it attempts profundity (on Artistic Freedom, Women, Politics) it is blocked by its hero's obtuseness. From Bech's Jerusalem honeymoon, I offer the following sample: 'Arabs, Bech perceived, are the blacks of Israel.' Holy cow, you don't say?

First published in 1966, Paul Bowles' **Up Above the World** is a sinister, uncomfortable thriller, the lingering, troubling effects of which are created less by the plot itself than the things that are left unexplained. Elderly Dr Slade and his much younger wife are on holiday in Latin America – 'not exactly touring, we just move around as we please' – when they find themselves being slowly sucked in by lives whose relevance to their own they cannot understand. Landscapes; townscapes; minor characters – nothing is described that doesn't increase the sense of a trap being sprung. This is a welcome re-issue. □

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Capitalist Democracy in Britain

RALPH MILIBAND *Oxford* £8.95

The British political system, according to Miliband, is 'democracy' in a restricted mode. It permits participation up to the point where its own legitimacy will be generally accepted; but its main function (and for our rulers, its purpose) is the containment of popular pressure and class conflict. It is marked by a permanent tension between the promise of popular power and its effective denial.

The theme is hardly new: in a more general form, it is the standard marxist indictment of 'bourgeois' democracy, as expressed in Miliband's previous work; while the specific complaint has recently achieved wide currency in the speeches of Tony Benn. Miliband's special contribution, which has made him our foremost marxist political theorist, is to express these ideas far more clearly than any other marxist, and with a great deal more depth and historical information than any political leader.

This book is a marxist Bagehot, an overview of political culture and institutions in a wider sociological frame. It covers a lot of familiar ground: parliament, trade unions, media, civil service, army, police, judiciary, monarchy – even local government – authoritatively indicating the role of each in the process of containment.

No one today can write of the British system as a stable state. Miliband turns finally to 'the future of capitalist democracy', and gives a succinct sketch of the the sort of authoritarian state which constitutes the British danger. His message, however, is one of caution: evidently he believes that capitalist democracy has plenty of reserves yet. He outlines good reasons, too, for scepticism about Labour's achieving serious change.

Miliband is, if anything, too judicious. To emphasise the continuity and unity of the British system may be to underestimate the changes that have taken place – the post-war 'settlement' – and those which we are now entering. Miliband wrote before the Falklands and doesn't go closely into Thatcherism. The book would have been more sharply focused if he had.

Martin Shaw

Out of Liverpool

GEORGE GARRETT

£2.25 (including postage) from Merseyside Writers' Committee, 2 Wellington Field, Liverpool L15 OEL

The fixity of the spotlight on George Orwell continues to leave many other important political and cultural figures of the 1930s obscurely in the shadows. One such person, George Garrett, Liverpool seaman, writer, essayist, actor and unemployed militant, is finally being rescued from obscurity by contemporary Liverpool trade unionists and writers. They have now issued a collection of short stories by Garrett, *Out of Liverpool,* stories originally published in *Left Review, The Adelphi* or *New Writing,* which still retain the very real power to recreate the smell and fear of poverty and unemployment in working-class communities in ways which, it has to be admitted, Orwell could not. The book is divided into 'Stories of the Sea' and 'Stories of the Land' and all are informed by the same ironical temperament that marked the Catholic-turned-Communist writer. Cheerfulness only occasionally breaks through. For the most part the stories detail a succession of appalling tyrannies, some petty, some monstrous, ranging from ruthless and destructive shipboard regimes to individual humiliation at the hands of priests and teachers, landlords and employers, Relief Guardians and workhouse masters. Premature death through sickness, hunger or the lack of will to live marks many of the stories. Garrett was percipient enough to create strong and resourceful women characters in his stories, knowing that poverty was no respecter of gender, and sensitive enough to realise that emotional insecurity brought even the 'toughest' of men to self-destruction with rapidity.

Garrett also wrote many songs and ballads and was a singular literary critic. He jointly edited a small book of essays on Shakespeare with William Empson, and brought his lengthy sea-going experience to his detailed criticism of much of the work of Conrad, pointing out Conrad's technical inaccuracies. This collection gives us one side of a remarkable and unjustly neglected figure who has spent too long in the shadows.

Ken Worpole

Benny: The Life and Times of a Fighting Legend

JOHN BURROWES *Mainstream* £7.95

Benny Lynch was born in the Gorbals 13 years after the reappearance there of the Black Death in 1900. In 1930 he became Scotland's first world boxing champion. He died in 1946 of drink. Fisticuffs are now going through a bad patch in the estimation of the medical profession and other deep thinkers. To many of us who grew up in the Thirties Benny was the folk hero which he still is to Mr Burrowes. But then social theorists should be warned that Mr Burrowes subscribes to the unfashionable 'short life – long fame' school of thought.

His account is by Runyon out of Mayhew. It is as much about the betting and boozing with which a desperate people sought solace in the bars and booths of a Glaswegian dustbin as about boxing. It's a marvellous, sprawling, funny, savage indictment of 'the infamous records of small offical inhumanity'. It is a hymn, whose lines only occasionally scan – 'If you eat all your spinach, you'll can fight Benny Lynach' – to the conviction that only the poor, and those who choose to live and work among the poor, can understand and help the poor. And an explanation of the rejection, by the poor, of police and politicians and men of property: 'What's some auld geezer, sitting back in his big chair in the India Club surrounded with flunkies feart tae talk to him, doing owning a chunk of Crown Street?' What indeed then, and what indeed today? If those who think they know what is good for the rest of us *must* learn about life from books rather than risk contamination by actual contact with the underprivileged, then let it be at least from books like this.

Bruce Hepburn

Prescriptions for Death: The Drugging of the Third World

MILTON SILVERMAN, PHILIP LEE and MIA LYDECKER *California* £13.60

Prescriptions for Death presents a grave indictment of the drug companies in the Third World. Dangerous medicines, with quite inadequate warnings on the packets, are sold for the treatment of relatively minor conditions. At the same time simple drugs are just not available to the vast majority of the people in the developing countries. The book, by three members of the University of California's Medical School, presents a detailed critique of marketing malpractices.

But the main new contribution of *Prescriptions for Death* is the short chapter devoted to bribery. The book names names, providing a horrifying insight into how the drug companies make their profits. The Swiss company Ciba-Geigy, for example, indulged in some rather unorthodox marketing techniques in the Philippines. A local Ciba-Geigy representative admitted that pornographic films were shown at a medical seminar – because doctors 'want something out of the ordinary'. The important physicians present were offered a 'visit during the night' from one of the hostesses. One local doctor explained: 'As I understand it, they give the doctors a choice between a set of ballpoint pens and a girl. It seems they usually have a lot of ballpoint pens left over.'

Less colourful, but more common, is the practice of paying a commission for each prescription. In Nigeria, for example, it has been estimated that one-third of the cost of prescription drugs goes in the form of kickbacks. Europe, however, is not immune from corruption. An Austrian journalist quoted in the book found documentary evidence that a local hospital official had written to thank the German company Bayer for sending him on a trip to England. He added that 'further preference and purchase of your firm's products in the hospital is to be understood.' Altogether a fascinating insight into the seamy side of the pharmaceutical trade.

Martin Bailey

The Sixties: A Fresh Look at the Decade of Change

FRANCIS WHEEN *Century* £9.95 & £6.95

Francis Wheen takes a broad view of the Sixties under the headings 'Youth', 'Politics', 'Sex', 'Class', 'Money' and 'Work and Play'. He has some interesting theories to put forward, and it's a great pity that the publishers threw away so much space on totally un-illuminating black and white photos, many without captions. It's equally annoying that Century didn't see their way to printing the cartoons Francis Wheen refers to and is forced to describe in the text.

The sections on politics, class and money are the best. Wheen pins down the wily Wilson with a nerveless hand and shows that what bred about where his heart should have been was an ad-man's image of a heart – a sort of slick, shiny, plastic thing. For the last couple of years I've been wondering why the press seemed to turn on Wilson: while he was PM all we got was his PR, and I admit I believed it till he closed down the pits and a make-up man in a TV studio in Glasgow told me that Wilson was the only politician he knew who brought his own make-up man to the studio with him (all the way to Glasgow!).

Wheen is as direct and enlightening as a good *NS* man should be on the subject of class. He also has a fine sense of irony; he lets the lies stand side by side with the facts:

> When the Conservatives were returned to office at the general election of 1959, Harold Macmillan announced that 'the class war is obsolete'. He then set about forming the most aristocratic government that Britain had seen in years.

The class con goes hand in hand with the money con, of course, and I finished the section on money feeling even more irritated with the publishers for not giving Wheen his head, for when he writes about money he is brilliantly lucid and satisfyingly cynical. He touches on them all – the developers, the pop-stars, Frost, Slater-Walker, Savundra, Hyams, Rachman and the Krays. A pity then that this is not much more than a Channel Four spin-off.

Anne Smith

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ART
John Spurling

Out of this world

Murillo
RA

The prodigal son leaving his father's house

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82), who was so much to the 19th century's taste that the Duke of Westminster swopped two Claudes and a Poussin plus £1,200 for his huge biblical scene *Laban Searching for His Stolen Household Gods in Rachel's Tent* and Disraeli exclaimed, 'for the first time in your life know what a great artist is Murillo, Murillo, Murillo!', has not appealed to the 20th century. In his lifetime, spent almost entirely in Seville, he was a highly successful painter of religious works, though he also did a few outstanding portraits and a series of genre scenes of street urchins which carried his reputation beyond Spain in the 18th century. This is the first comprehensive exhibition of his work ever mounted and it drew record attendances in Madrid last autumn.

The RA, their sponsors BAT Industries and their well-wishers, including this critic, must naturally be hoping that the same will happen in London, and the resplendent catalogue – with every painting reproduced in colour – suggests the scale of the organisers' optimism. But has Murillo's time really come round again?

What stands in the way of his rehabilitation is precisely the fact that he was primarily a religious artist, whose success, both aesthetic and popular, was based not on the sado-masochistic histrionics of Christianity but on its gentler, kinder, more innocent aspects. The innocence, indeed, comes very close to sentimentality and it is hard for us, living the far side of the 19th century, to separate the true Murillo from our notoriously sentimental forefathers' adoption of him. Hardest of all, though, is to return an aesthetic and worldly answer – 'Murillo is a great neglected master, this show must be seen' – to a question posed in a completely unsuitable context. Most of these pictures were made to be seen in churches or religious precincts, with all that implies of other sacred furniture, architecture, atmosphere and above all light, or rather the lack of it. At the RA they are hung in rows on white walls and – awkward as I find it to say so, after being so rude so often to the Tate's dimness (now happily on the mend) – washed flat with light. Murillo relies on leading your eyes from darkness into the light of his painting – he began as a follower of the tenebrist school associated with Caravaggio and evolved into a specialist in 'glories', or visions of heavenly beings floating on golden clouds. His colour effects and the mysteries they allude to are negated by being pinned out like so many dead butterflies in the overpowering clarity of these toplit, secular halls.

The main surviving element, as you might expect, is the more earthly part of Murillo's talent. The early paintings concentrate on the solidity and separateness of the figures. In *San Diego Giving Food to the Poor*, the subject is even rather comically belied by the doll-like rotundity of the children gathered piously round the central stew-pot, while the sturdy beggar on the right seems to be there chiefly for the virtuoso possibilities of his shiny, bald pate. But *The Street Urchin*, the first known example of Murillo's work in this genre and not much later in date than *San Diego*, is a masterpiece of Caravaggiesque depth and realism, down to the dusty soles of the boy's feet, the relaxed foreshortening of his bent head and legs and the square carpet of sunlight thrown bottom right and forward by the window at top left and back. Here is a painter who, by the age of about 30, can do the brown-tinted, everyday world – its earthenware pitcher, its floppy basket and apples, its rags, flesh, shaven head and general grittiness – as if his name were Velasquez.

In the religious paintings of his first maturity Murillo extends this by now apparently effortless realism to the Holy Family. *The Holy Family with the Little Bird*, for instance, is simply a domestic scene. The child holds a finch up out of reach of a small white dog, while the seated father, clasping the child against his knee, looks fondly down and the mother watches from the side. The finch perhaps alludes, at some remove, to the crown of thorns and the child is spotlit, but otherwise it might be any young family – though a peculiarly handsome one – of the artisan class in a relaxed moment. Again, the two paintings hanging near it, each of a mother and child, could be purely secular portraits of particular women and children, except that they have the grave presence and idealised sweetness of Raphael Madonnas. Murillo's solution to the problem of marrying religious content to naturalistic appearance is at this stage merely to enhance the humanity of his sitters, to make them in effect so beautiful, innocent and loveable that the viewer requires no further persuasion – from angels, saints, miraculous signs, thrones, crowns or even other human worshippers – to pay his devotion. Perfect humanity equals divinity. But just here, of course, lurks the spectre of sentimentality. There is a very thin line between perfect humanity and perfect vapidity, a line the Victorian painters never succeeded in crossing to the right side. Murillo succeeded surprisingly often, but only with his Virgin Marys and his Christ-children; his female saints are distinctly sentimental and his grown-up Christs and male saints are frankly dull.

Indeed dullness is the other spectre that haunts Murillo, for his quietism generally precludes the more dramatic episodes from Sacred Literature and his imagination does not really function beyond the close-up domestic scene. The figures of the shepherds or kings, with their poultry, animals and page-boys, pressed densely round the Christmas manger, are living, detailed studies of ordinary people struck with happiness and astonishment; but in more spacious settings, such as the huge *Laban* or *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, the tension drops and the figures have the air of third-rate actors put through their movements by a bored and derivative director. In *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, the central group of loving father embracing grateful and penitent son, while the recurrent white dog paws excitedly at the son's legs and the servants bring forward clothes

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suitable to his station, is true and moving, but Murillo pushes his luck on the left, where the fatted calf is approaching with an equally loving expression, accompanied by his gentle-faced executioner with an axe. In fact this ludicrous intrusion of what one might call the meat-eating dimension into Murillo's world encapsulates all that is missing from it, for even the later street urchins (well supplied with bread, pastry and fruit) are plump and laughing in spite of the realism of their torn clothes, tattered footwear and dirty feet.

But Murillo aspired beyond perfect humanity to heavenly glory. Sometimes the real world of St Bernard in his study or a group of awed Spaniards is retained at bottom left or right to help the viewer up; sometimes one is carried straight into the empyrean, among sunset clouds and a decorous riot of cherubs. The key to everything, however, remains Mary's beauty. She is no longer the seated mother, but a full-length aerial virgin, dressed in white with a billowing blue cloak, and she symbolises the Immaculate Conception, the idea (much debated during the Counter-Reformation) that Mary was conceived without original sin. She has become, in other words, the only perfect human ever created, a being to be gazed at and worshipped from below, a kind of Holy Grail in the form of an untouched, untouchable, desirable woman. No wonder the Victorians thrilled to these images! In several of them Murillo even places the crescent moon on which Mary stands in such a way as to suggest the blade of a scimitar keeping the too ecstatic viewer at bay. No, they are not sentimental nor exactly lubricious (except for the one in which St Bernard opens his mouth to receive a jet of milk straight from the virgin's breast), but somewhere between the two: visions of goodness and perfection which half evoke all those evil desires and actions of men, yet disdain to take account of them. □

Correction

The full title of the Macmillan book reviewed by Geoffrey Thurley last week is *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne* (editors Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose).

Among this week's contributors:

CHRISTOPHER HILL's books include *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution, The World Turned Upside Down* and *Milton and the English Revolution*. He is the co-author, with Barry Reay and William Lamont, of *The World of the Muggletonians*, to be published by Maurice Temple Smith next month.

PAUL BINDING is currently working on a short study of Lorca and a book about aspects of post-war Germany.

JOHN KEEGAN is the author of *The Face of Battle* and lectures in war studies at Sandhurst.

A short story by JAMES CAMPBELL is included in the new Penguin collection, *Firebird 2*, to be published shortly.

TELEVISION
William Boyd

Rise and shine

THE LURE of the video recorder was exceptionally powerful. The new technology beckoned enticingly. But it had to be resisted. Duty demanded that day one of **Breakfast Time** (BBC-1) be experienced as it was intended – live – and not at my convenience in mid-afternoon. So, conscious again of the enormous physical and mental efforts this column demands, and only marginally warmed by a glow of self satisfaction, I rose at 6 a.m. to greet the dawn of a new era in television broadcasting.

It was pitch black outside! I might have been watching a midnight movie. Only my bowl of high-fibre bran and mashed alfalfa sprouts made any concession to the early morning mood. I felt like a man roused from a deep and contented sleep, brain cells dormant, senses barely operative, movements controlled solely by reflex and habit. In this mood of hostility and resentment I switched on at half past six. Was this, I wondered, what everyone else who was watching felt like.

Perhaps this was the assumption that the BBC-1 team were working on because the show opened in a very low-key manner: no fanfares, no overt glee, no hearty greetings. Frank Bough wore a mushroom-coloured velveteen V-neck, Selina Scott grey and white, Nick Ross pale blue. Photophobic reaction to the glimmering tube was so mild as to be non-existent.

For a while, though, I thought I was having problems. Some mote in my eye, some warp or crinkle in the retina had superimposed a blue disc on my field of vision. Obviously stimulated by cathode-ray vibrations, it settled in the bottom, right-hand corner of the screen and, rub my eyes, blink and shake my head as I would, it refused to go away. However, I got used to it after a while and it proved to be only a minor irritant.

Meanwhile, in the studio everything was very laid back. Bough sported the only tie, everyone else went for the fresh, *sportif* look, recently pioneered on *Match of the Day*. Except, that is, for the weatherman, who looked like a lumberjack. The set itself was more curious, dominated by a curving leatherette sofa unit. It's meant to resemble the lobby of a rather plush hotel, or perhaps the transit lounge in a Scandinavian airport. In any event it's an area designed to suggest 'passing through', where guests will pop in,

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chat for a while and then move on. To me it looked like one of those revamped, open-plan banks that seem so popular in high streets these days. But, as with the banks, there's something a little too blatantly factitious about the *Breakfast Time* set. Something not quite right about it – perhaps the rather nasty nylon net curtains they've got hanging in the background.

The content of the show was unexceptionable on the whole. There is a regular cycle of national and international news, regional news and traffic details and weather. There's a lot of weather. Lumberjack weatherman Francis Wilson actually did a good job of saying the same thing a dozen times in the show's two-and-a-half-hour duration and still managed to sound interested in his reports. He was aided in this by a 'weather window' on which were printed moving satellite pictures of the earth. Or at least that's what he said. They actually looked like the work of some demented abstract expressionist and gave rise to more eye trouble as one peered into the shimmering whorls of colour trying, like some doomed astronaut, to pick out a familiar land-mass.

In between the weather we had, essentially, the *Nationwide* magazine format. News reports (the 'shoot-first-ask-questions-later' case, the newshounds v. Princess Diana), interviews (Sir Harry Secombe, Leo Sayer, Michael Foot) and a fair amount of chat between Bough and Scott. The one terrible mistake was a fitness lady in a bright green cat suit. She was set up on a podium at Waterloo Station where she hectored and bullied sullen, bleary commuters into attempting various stretching exercises.

Not surprisingly the tone and mood of the show brightened as the morning wore on. The giggle factor increased and, less forgiveably, a note of self-congratulation emerged as phone-in testimonials to the programme's wonderful, fantastic qualities were eagerly read out. Was there a hint of desperation in the air? This show must be great, it seemed to imply, otherwise all these people wouldn't be phoning in. The girls on the switchboard were 'hassled' and 'swamped' with innumerable callers, Bough regularly assured us, but he didn't manage to dispel the notion of a man spitting into the wind.

Will it work? The mix is so inoffensive and bland as to be counter-productive. Attempting to emulate the unbelievably polished, slick but soulless American versions of breakfast shows would be disastrous for all sorts of reasons. The proven successes of early morning radio (Wogan and the *Today* show) point the way. They work because there's a distinctive, not to say idiosyncratic character to the presenters and presentation. And it's the radio adherents (those who clearly need a medium in the morning) that breakfast TV must woo if it's to survive. More mundane obstacles have to be overcome too. Radio also scores because it demands only *one* functioning sense in the morning rather than two. Also most people have a radio in the room where they eat breakfast. Until we all have a portable TV in the kitchen (memo to Accounts) it will need succulent bait to tempt us elsewhere. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Driftwood

The State of Things (15) *Camden Plaza*
Muddy River (PG) *Paris Pullman*
Eating Raoul (18) *Gate, Notting Hill; Screen on the Green; Classic, Oxford Street*
Airplane II – The Sequel (PG) *Plaza; Classic, Oxford Street; some ABCs*

It would be all too easy to exhaust my space and you with an account of the unusual circumstances attending the making of Wim Wenders' latest film and of the many references to other films and film people resident therein. To begin with, it is not the itinerant German director's latest chronologically: during the break in shooting *Hammett*, he made the awful, cack-handed 'homage' to Nicholas Ray, *Lightning Over Water*, and followed it with this one, a swiftly assembled job based largely in Portugal and using the crew and many of the actors from Raul Ruiz's *The Territory*. Co-written with Robert Kramer, **The State of Things** nowhere belies the immodesty of its title. It has the unabashed conceit of its convictions, which would seem to be that (a) art these days inevitably feeds on itself and its past, (b) there is an audience fascinated by games played around this dilemma, and (c) anything goes. 'Life is in colour, but black-and-white is more realistic', says a Hollywood cameraman within the film (and the film itself is in black-and-white). 'Stories only exist in stories, whereas life goes on without the need to turn into stories', expounds the director within the film and an actress solemnly writes this down. How seriously we are meant to take these two statements is unclear (though we both hear and see the second). But they certainly come in handy in their loose context.

That director is 'Fritz' Munro (Patrick Bauchau), a tall, rarely shaven, arrogant young German making an American-financed s-f movie on the Portuguese coast, by an abandoned hotel into which cast and crew have moved. Money runs out and producer Gordon (Allen Goorwitz) can't be contacted in LA. Meanwhile, we get impressionistic glimpses of the stranded movie folk. One actress unhappily plays the violin; another (Isabelle Weingarten), feeling *déjà eue* in her affair with an actor, does moody, voice-over bits from a lent copy of Alan LeMay's *The Searchers;* Sam Fuller croaks around as that cameraman – Joe Corby, near-anagram of real-life Joe Biroc, if you care, and improvises a convincingly brash drunk scene in a Lisbon bar. Not so incidentally, Henri Alekan's black-and-white photography of rocks, sea and sky is beautifully graded, a visual bonus to be grateful for (Small Mercies Department), as is Fred Murphy's harsher scan of LA. Back at the stranded movie, Fritz's small daughter delivers a toe-curling morale-booster, about choosing one's parents, to anxious mommy (Viva Auder), scriptgirl and amateur sketcher, who seems almost to have twigged her husband's a self-centred shit. One excellent interlude of light relief comes as actor Robert (Geoffrey Carey) pegs out washing and recounts a Californian childhood ruined by physical defects and disease.

This mostly tedious and pretentious stuff takes a turn when Fritz finally lights out for LA, stumbles on mysterious Gordon (on the run from money sharks appalled that the s-f is in b-and-w), and, after maundering, criss-cross monologues in a speeding mobile home, there are a couple of shootings: it takes a turn, that is, into mind-numbing melodrama. Wim Wenders has called the outcome '*film trouvé*'. He said it. Myself, I reckon the implied analogy with those interesting chunks of driftwood some art-lovers harbour speaks for itself. Films don't just happen. For the record, *The State of Things* won the Golden Lion and another prize at Venice last year.

ACCOMPANYING a revival of the thoroughly artful Spanish *The Spirit of the Beehive* is a Japanese first feature, Kohei Oguri's **Muddy River** (Silver Medal, Moscow, '81). This moderately appealing, meandering tale, after a garlanded novel by Teru Miyamoto, follows some incidents in the life of chubby-faced nine-year-old Nobuo and his café-owning parents in Osaka in 1956. The lad chums up with a waif of his own age, Kiichi, and Kiichi's slightly older sister. Their houseboat, on which their beautiful young prostitute-mother plies her trade, has recently tethered just across the river from the café. Nobuo's charming mama (Yumiko Fujita) generously befriends the gentle whore's kids – some nice scenes here – as does papa (Takahiro Tamura), with his pea-and-three-cups trick. Papa, fiftyish, still war-melancholy, takes resentful mama and Nobuo to his first wife's hospital death-bed in Kyoto; a newspaper headline on the train going home again – 'The Postwar Period is Over!' – cunningly implies a double unburdening for papa, a new lease of life. The piece has several neat details and is shot with an art-movie eye for the telling frame; too much of this, maybe. And frankly little Nobuo's expression hardly changes. *We* supply the kid's reactions; and we have been hereabouts before. *Muddy Waters* relies on experienced goodwill almost throughout.

Paul Bartel's **Eating Raoul,** with Bartel and Mary Woronov in sex-soaked LA as very unswinging marrieds who advertise a kinky erotic service so they may kill and rob punters and buy a country restaurant, is one of those cheapies that sound so ghastly in synopsis they pick up praise for being less bad than expected. In places it really is genial, funny. **Airplane II** with maybe a dozen or so successful *Mad* magazine-style gags, rates zilch beside its brilliant prequel. All with access to the NFT are rather urged to a super season, 'Merchant, Ivory at Twenty-One', opening this Friday with *The Householder* and *Shakespeare Wallah.* There's gold in them there hills. □

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THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Courting disaster

Miss Julie
STRINDBERG *Lyric Studio, Hammersmith*
Useful Vices
ICA

Strindberg called his Miss Julie 'a half-woman, a manhater', with a fundamentally 'insipid, vapid and degenerated mind'. She was, he went on, a common type, often to be found selling herself for 'power, decorations, aggrandisement, diplomas, as she formerly did for money'. It is, of course, an outrageous indictment, one that tells us more about Strindberg than about either the New Woman in general or, for that matter, about the particular example of maimed femininity he created in **Miss Julie** itself. Authors, especially those half-crazed with sexual umbrage, aren't always the best judges of their own work; and it is open to a performer, indeed may even be his or her duty, to return to the first principles of naturalistic acting and attempt to play with sympathy what was written with spleen.

This Cheryl Campbell does, perhaps too conscientiously. It should still, surely, be possible to believe that she could force her fiancé to leap over her riding-crop and whack him when he failed; and she hasn't quite the authority or the venom to make such anecdotes plausible. What Ms Campbell offers instead is an absorbing study of a reckless innocent on the loose, eager to discover the true nature of the flame that half-fascinates, half-frightens her. Who is this man, this valet, this Jean? Now imperiously, now flirtatiously, now imperiously *and* flirtatiously, she begins to test both him and herself; and gradually the game gets more serious and more perilous. The story he spins about lying in the thistles and watching her glide along the terrace in her pink dress moves this Julie greatly. 'It must be a terrible misfortune to be poor', she cries, and impulsively embraces him. Suddenly she is in his clutches, and before long in his bed, and more because she's naive, impressionable and, if only sporadically, warm-hearted than because she's the self-destructive bitch-goddess of Strindbergian legend and British theatrical tradition.

It's a substantial shift of emphasis, but one that never permits sympathy to slide into sentimentality. Certainly, Ms Campbell shirks none of Miss Julie's emotional ugliness after she's emerged, *virgo tacta,* from Jean's lair: the screeches and mottled sobs, the hysterical shame, the helplessness and rage, the self-accusations and the awful, impotent acrimony: 'I detest you, as I detest rats'. But the result of that shift is to leave Miss Julie looking more, much more of a victim than usual, and not only a victim of the man she's herself half-seduced. What wrecks and destroys her is primarily her background: aloof father, oppressive mother, grand and cloistered upbringing. Her unformed and scattered temperament combines with a genuine distaste for aristocratic privilege to impel her across the class divide; and, once she's over it, residual pride and the family code of honour combine with a more instinctive revulsion to drive her into despair and, finally, suicide.

To put it much more crudely than Ms Campbell does, a potentially decent and creative woman is ruined by the iniquities of her society; and so it is, too, with Stephen Rea as Jean. Like her, he brings out what's worthy of respect in the character and underplays what's swinish. His warnings to her at the beginning are not sly seducer's ploys, but authentic attempts to point out to her the disasters she's courting; and even his post-hoc recriminations – 'I found the conquest a little too easy to be exciting', and so on – emerge less as cheap male triumphalism, more as the expression of a long-accumulated bitterness he can't manage to suppress. His class origins have distorted what's best in him, as hers have in her; and I can't altogether deny that this is in turn something of a distortion of Strindberg. But it is less so than might at first appear, and it has the merit of bringing the play rather closer to our concerns. You might say that the achievement of Clare Davidson's production is to save the demented Swede from the wilder excesses of his own misogyny: an achievement which, alas, leaves me little time to celebrate that of Contact Theatre, briefly in London from Leeds. Its **Useful Vices** is a surreal anthropological treatise about a primitive tribe that inhabits the East End rain-forest, wears double-breasted suits, chews gum, commits crimes, and performs precisely circumscribed rituals at the Romford Palais: a triumph of imagination and atmospheric virtuosity. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2754 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

The future of the wireless is under debate, and considerable changes are planned for the national channels. So how about a soap opera for Radio 3? Extracts of up to 140 words, please, by 4 February.

No 2751 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Love lyrics which take into account the transitory nature of modern coupling.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

'And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.' That was a few years ago, of course. Today a more accurate account of the matter is that given by N. J. Warburton:

> Our love will last till stars fall to the ground.
> (Hark, can you hear a distant crashing sound?)

A fiver to Warburton; ten apiece the rest.

Had we but World enough, and Time,
Monogamy would be no crime.
You Joan, me Darby, we'd retire
To warm our slippers by the fire.
A bungalow in Slough, or Reading!
A party for our diamond wedding!
Yes, we'd be happy as can be.
But sorry, love, that's not for me.
For at my back I always hear
A voice that says: 'One wife's small beer!
You still appeal to women, mate!
Just play the field – don't hesitate!'
It's nothing personal, of course –
But could you give me a divorce? PETER NORMAN

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That intimacy can bestow
For, let us say, six months or so.

For O my darling, you and I
Will not stay faithful till we die,
Since, let's admit it without fuss,
We're both of us promiscuous.

So live with me and be my Love
Till one or other gets the shove,
And when we part we shan't repine.
Now, sweetie-pie – your place or mine?
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

'Love, though I leave your bed, O be not vexed,
Nor think I'm lying dead upon the floor:
I play your glorious organ, as of yore;
I fight your war; I go with muscles flexed
To Flora first, to Leonora next,
Or else to Tess – loved I not Honour more –
And so, goodnight. P.S. All right, I snore,
But never say that I am undersexed!'

'Okay, O Love. Yes, so was I, bored stiff
Last night, like Patience on a monument:
So off I fly, to Glen, to Dale, to Cliff,
Till almost – but not quite – all passion spent . . .
Love, when you've done with Dawn on London Bridge,
There's still some eggs and bacon in the fridge!'
GINA BERKELEY

My true love hath my heart and I have his.
Our Union has by Church been sanctified;
With wedding guests and gifts and gaieties;
With Blessings showered on Bridegroom and on Bride.
And Heaven has doubly blessed our Marriage Bed
With two dear Babes that pipe in accents sweet:
Quaternity of Love with thou the Head,
Yet Four in One – a family complete.
But Cupid wingèd is and so doth range
Love's Country: so, my love, if it transpire
That thou or I or circumstance should change,
The matrimonial home I will require;
And just as long as we remain good friends,
I'll let you have the children at weekends.
C. I. SEMEONOFF

'Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's Day?'
Our hifi plays the Pastoral, reminding
All mortals that their idylls slip away
And vows have their rubatos, less than binding.
I languish, like the rusting solar panel,
That yearns into the smog of Perrin's Court
For light-of-love. No television-channel
Would bother with *our* story – it's too short.

'Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's Day?'
Well, yes – in that you won't be here tomorrow;
You'll take the Oscar Woollens, I the Klee,
Apportioned more in anger than in sorrow.

The Beethoven, so measured, firm and Klemperery,
Has done; for art (like love, it seems) is temporary.
JIMMIE PEARSE

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FIRST PERSON

Carol Rumens

Public spirits

IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE on New Year's Eve, a widow who loved crowds and had gone by herself to join the revellers as a first step in reclaiming her enthusiasm for life was killed in a stampede that caused numerous injuries and two other deaths. Crowd violence – the hooliganism after the soccer match, the 'scuffles' that invariably 'break out' at a demonstration – is a fact of urban life. There is nothing new about it. The English have always been keen on rioting, as historical records, especially of the eighteenth century, show. The mob then was often a good deal uglier than now – sometimes with good reason.

The Trafalgar Square crowd, though, was not out to protest a cause, nor did it consist of rival factions of football supporters. Its purpose was simple celebration. The euphoria, or impatience, that turned out so nastily may in future be controllable by more policing, bigger and better crash barriers etc. Such attempts may also be construed as provocative – or at least a challenge – by those most in need of 'control'. Either way, they point to an interesting problem. People have lost the art of being together joyfully in crowds.

The term 'nuclear family' may sound dated, but the condition it describes is as prevalent as ever. Spectator sports and recreations are increasingly being consumed privately, via TV and video cassette. Most people,understandably enough in the London area, eschew public transport whenever possible, preferring to travel encapsulated in splendid isolation, and killing a considerable number of each other's children every year in the process. In the streets they walk glaze-eyed, locked incommunicado into the private jam-session of the head-set. To be on the street at all is to be at risk, particularly for a woman after dark, and if an attack should take place, the victim is increasingly likely to find that her public-spirited fellow-citizens simply avert their eyes and hurry past. Once a week, of course, there is a great open-air Sabbath, boiling, come rain or shine, through every high street and shopping centre, but again, none of the participants is much interested in anyone else. Each little family group is out for itself, busily furnishing its own little nest, often in hypermarkets where human speech is largely redundant.

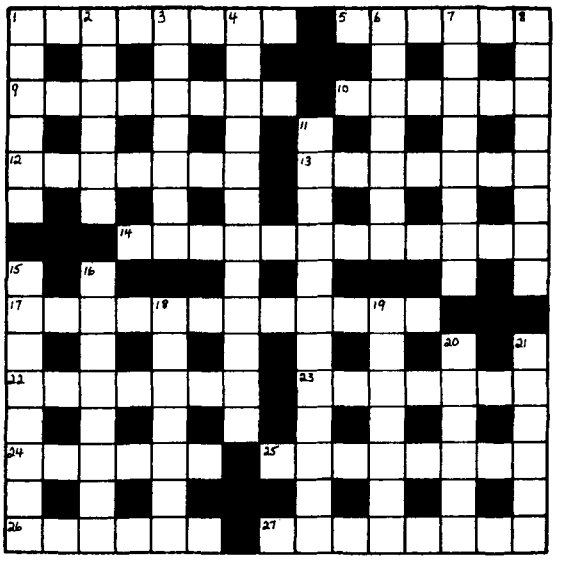
Apart from royal weddings and the imported Notting Hill carnival, we as a nation have few large-scale celebrations. There is no Fasching, no Mardi Gras. Those festivals we do retain tend to shut us firmly indoors. Although, at least at Christmas and Easter, we are still dimly aware of the theistic overtones of the binge, few of us are likely to go so far as to step inside a church. There is nothing between the Midnight Mass of the devotional few and the domestic booze-up of the rest of us.

Yet is it really necessary to invoke gods or royals to justify our human need for carnival and feast-day? If we can no longer share a faith in God, there are plenty of occasions – New Year's Eve is only one of them – that can stimulate us to share our extraordinarily resilient feelings of hope and faith in the future. Perhaps we should commission some talented film or theatre director to design us a new calendar of secular, humanist feast-days. On the smaller scale, we could easily organise a few of our own. Many people felt that Jubilee Year ought to set a precedent in neighbourly mingling – but how many street-parties have there been since 1977?

In Agadir, Morocco, where I spent a recent holiday, there is an undistinguished concrete shopping precinct which, on a typical afternoon, is transformed by the gentle spirit of carnival. Rival troupes of musicians and dancers collect their own attentive circles. There are snake-charmers and story-tellers. Popcorn and roasted-nut sellers set up shop and the water-seller does a brisk trade. It isn't staged for the tourists; the spectators are all local people. No policemen are visible. At sunset the Muezzin calls and the crowd disperses as quickly as it gathered. It has behaved impeccably. Though sizable – 500-strong, at a guess – and dominated by young males (women, children and the elderly sat aside, watching from low stone walls) it hasn't seen a single 'scuffle'. □

Weekend Crossword 1388

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1388, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 1 February.



Name_____

Address_____

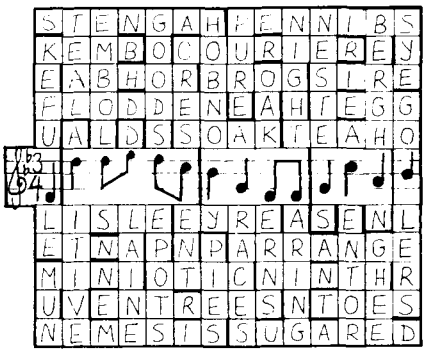
ACROSS

1 Strange men as fit as plain (8)
5 Plant from which a cigar is made (6)
9 Retire, but not on a winning note? (8)
10 Prayer in a malefactor is only deceit (6)
12 Aircraft part manufactured in a small centre in the Newcastle area (7)
13 The country will be good for the sick and reverse of healthy (7)
14 Changing the map by putting dots and a circle inside a reddish substance (12)
17 Nation travelling around with cycles in fine weather (12)
22 Animal which provides human beings with a place to drive (7)
23 It may be lit for leader in bed (7)
24 Persian sends note to former British politician (6)
25 Miscarriage of justice puts one in the cooler (8)
26 Something on board for farmer (6)
27 People who put king back in river (8)

DOWN

1 Animal noise which makes one take to the air (6)
2 Warning to skaters? (6)
3 Opera made to run smoothly if shown up (7)
4 Only acting tutors, but they enable one to make progress (12)
6 Animal found in stream in part of India (7)
7 Hold back as there is a break over bad weather (8)
8 Includes an article about those against it rising above us (8)
11 Advanced technology may give one short holidays with picnics (7, 5)
15 Animal found holding a limb up like this (8)
16 The lands used by a novelist (8)
18 Dwelling which provides a place for animals to live in without a label (7)
19 Choose artist for play (7)
20 A loved one with the bottle is in jolly mood (6)
21 Makes silent pictures (6)

Solution to Salamanca 63



Notes: Tune of 'We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year'.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 63
James Crossland (Nottingham)
N. W. Harris (Wood Green)
R. Hunter (Glasgow)

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Appointments

NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SECRETARY

Applications are invited for the appointment of General Secretary of NALGO, to succeed the present holder of the office on his retirement on 26 November 1983.

The salary is **£29,421** rising by annual increments to **£31,821** per annum (including London Weighting allowance).

The post is terminable by not less than three months' notice in writing on either side, and is superannuable under the NALGO Staff Superannuation Fund rules.

Full details and application form available on request from the General Secretary, NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ. Completed application forms must be received by the General Secretary no later than 28 February 1983.

County Surveyor

£24,798-£26,427
Plus an extra territorial payment of £537 per annum

The post of County Surveyor will become vacant in March 1983. Applications are now invited from suitably qualified candidates, male or female, who have wide and appropriate experience at the highest level.

The County Surveyor is responsible for the organisation, operation and management of a Department which is primarily concerned with the following functions:- maintenance and improvement of the County's roads, trunk road and motorway network, traffic management/road safety, development control, design (including industrial development), transportation, street lighting, waste disposal, bridge work, Central Plant Repair Depot, Materials Testing Laboratory and the provision of a civil engineering service to the East Midlands Airport.

Appropriate qualifications and proven managerial and administrative ability are essential.

Further details and an application form (to be returned by 11th February 1983) may be obtained from the County Personnel Officer, Manpower Services Division, Derbyshire County Council, County Offices, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3AG, or by telephoning Matlock 3411, ext 6931.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EXPLOYER

DERBYSHIRE
County Council

GLC
Working for London

Press Officer
£13,809-£15,021

As a result of the emphasis placed by the Council upon the effectiveness of its communications with Londoners, an experienced journalist/public relations officer is now required to work within the Majority Party Secretariat at The County Hall.

This will involve liaison with elected Members and senior officers of the Council and working closely with senior Members on a daily basis to provide advice and guidance to the Public Relations Branch on the policy content of news releases and other public information. The work will also include arranging Press briefings and TV/Radio interviews.

A clear understanding of the current political issues facing the Council is essential. The successful candidate will also need to demonstrate enthusiasm and a capacity for hard work.

The salary will be within the range indicated, inclusive of London Weighting allowance.

For further details and an application form, which must be returned by 7th February 1983, write to the Director-General's Department, DG/AE/NS/113, Greater London Council, Room 203, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB, or telephone 01-633 1527.

The GLC is an equal opportunities employer

ISLINGTON HOUSING RIGHTS PROJECT

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to be responsible for our campaigning, community work and research in the private housing sector in Islington.

Salary: £8,700

We are a non-hierarchical independent organisation.

Information and application forms from: **IHRP, 129 St. John's Way, London N19. Tel: 01-272 9447.**

Closing date: 4 Feb. 1983

COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROJECT

We want someone to do 4 months' work on pay and conditions in community organisations, the role of management committees, etc., leading to the preparation of an information pack for community groups. Must be able to work on own initiative. Payment equivalent to AP4 pt29 **(£8,679 p.a.)** plus holiday allowance and expenses.

Write giving details to **Hackney Community Action, 380 Old St, London EC1** (further info phone 01-729 5536). Closing date 31 Jan.

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Apply Nancy Webber for appointments after 3 February, 01-734 3786

NS COMPS

E. O. PARROTT, editing a forthcoming book of Limericks, wishes to know more about the identity of the following pseudonyms used in past NS Comps:

R.F.C.	**P.E.A.**
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Tewanbucket	**Yorick**
J.E.C.	**Otto Watteau**
R.I.	**Hymie Sneak**
L.E.J.	**Plaiwon**
H.M.	**Lyndon T. Mole**
Tallis	**C.K.B.**
Xam	**W. Stewart**
Sir Robert Witt	**Sagittarius**

Please reply in confidence to: P.O. Box No. 389, St. John's Wood SDO, Lodge Road, London, NW8.

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GLC

Working for London

Equal Opportunities within the GLC

The GLC has embarked upon a series of new initiatives aimed at positively establishing equal opportunities for all its employees. Implementation of this policy will give rise to extensive changes in employment and training practices and procedures and involve the introduction of a range of positive action measures.

To work in support of these initiatives, the Council wishes to recruit a number of people who possess an understanding of and are committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment for women, ethnic minorities and the disabled.

Equal Opportunities Officers

4 Posts £11,880-£13,353

Working on the research and development of positive action programmes, one officer to be concerned with 16-19 year olds, a second with those over 19, both requiring a knowledge and experience of relevant educational and training opportunities, and possessing the capacity to initiate and implement projects.

Advising on career and employment opportunities will call for experience of careers counselling, an understanding of the specific employment and training needs of ethnic minorities and women and the ability to organise workshops and promotional activities.

On work related to the provision of day-care facilities and on job-sharing the officer will need to demonstrate knowledge of local government or the GLC and to be familiar with current debates on provision for 0-5 year olds.

One post-holder may be designated as Deputy to the Equal Opportunities Adviser on an enhanced salary rising to £15,021.

Equal Opportunities Trainers

3 Posts £11,880-£13,353

Providing direct training to the Council's staff in support of equal opportunities, officers will need to possess proven skills and experience of training in this or a closely related area and have a good understanding of up-to-date personnel practices and relevant legislation.

Information & Publicity Officer

£8,319-£11,538

Publicising and promoting equal opportunities policies and programmes to staff within the GLC, demanding excellent research and journalistic skills and in particular the ability to communicate in writing with all levels of staff.

In each case, an innovative and practical approach will be essential and should be combined with an ability to communicate and work effectively as a member of a team within a large organisation.

Salaries will be within the ranges indicated, inclusive of London Weighting Allowance.

For further details and an application form, which must be returned by 18th February 1983, write to the Personnel Department, PE/FSD, Greater London Council, Room 316, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB, or telephone 01-633 5728.

Please state clearly in all correspondence for which position you are applying.

The GLC is an equal opportunities employer

Socialist Environment and Resources Association

requires a

PART-TIME CO-ORDINATOR

to be involved in the administrative and political work of the organisation, developing campaigns, liaising with other organisations, expanding and organising SERA. Applicants should be **Socialists** with some practical political experience, the ability to write, organise and work effectively with other people.

Further information from:

Sheila Duncan, SERA
9 Poland Street, London W1
Telephone:
01-439 3749

Closing date: **4 February**

EXPERIENCED SECRETARY/PA with excellent organisation skills wanted by Labour MP. Apply to Box 5361 by 25 January.

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

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PUT UP TENTS in France or pick plums in Britain. 'Summer Jobs Abroad' and 'Summer Jobs in Britain' both list 30,000 varied vacancies and cost £3.95 each from bookshops or Vac-Work, 9 Park End St, Oxford.

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OVERSEAS CONTRACT Engineer, mid forties, awaiting divorce, interests include music, flying, cruising and home life. Would like to hear from lady interested in my life style. Small photo appreciated. Box 5369.

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PRETTY UNATTRACTIVE northern lecturing woman (forty-ish), with reticent tendencies – seeks literate minder. Box 5340.

RUMOUR HAS it that intelligent, humorous, sensitive, interesting, considerate, non-sexist men (30s) don't exist. Sceptical woman seeks dissenter. Box 5359.

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LISTINGS

THUR 20 JAN

BELFAST The future role of women in Northern Ireland politics. Meeting chaired by Muriel Wilson, Chairman EOC. Spkrs include Lesley Abdela, Nora Owen TD, Mary Frahill, Mary Harney TD, Doris Robin. 8pm Europa Hotel. **Belfast 667206**

LONDON NW1 Forming a Co-operative. 7pm, Working Men's College, Crowndale Road. **01-387 2037**

FRI 21 JAN

LONDON NW1 Concert of musical improvisation, performance, poetry — and contradictions. Performers incl: Maggie Nicols, Carol Grimes, Sue May, Josefina Cupido, Maddy Maze. Women only, 8pm, 42 Gloucester Avenue. Org by London Musicians' Collective.

LONDON WC2 'Law and Revolutionary Nationalism' — the liberation movements. DN Pritt Memorial Lecture by Professor Richard Falk. 7pm New Theatre, LSE, Houghton St. Org by Haldane Society. **01-451 1122**

CARDIFF The Human Cost of Nuclear War. First of 3 national conferences. Sessions on medical consequences nuclear weapons, health planning, threat and reality of nuclear war, responsibility of physicians. Chairmen: Sir Richard Doll, Prof Alwyn Smith, Dr J. Gleisner, Sir Douglas Black. St Davids Hall, Cardiff. Org by Medical Assn for the Prevention of War and Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons. **0222 562021**

NEWHAM Unemployment isn't working — Co-ops are! Public opening of Newham Co-operative Development Agency. Spkrs: Mike Ward, George Ryde. 4.30-7.30 T&GWU Offices, 43 West Ham Lane, E15

SAT 22 JAN

STOCKWELL Last showing 'King: Montgomery to Memphis'; documentary film for Martin Luther King Memorial Week. 7.30 Methodist Church, Jeffreys Road, London SW4. Org by Peace Pledge Union. **01-387 5501**

LONDON WC1 Women and taxation. Spkr Elizabeth Sidney, Women's Liberal Federation. 10-3.30pm Churchill Room, London House, Mecklenburgh Sq. Org 300 Group. **01-223 9374 (eves.)**

BIRMINGHAM West Midlands CND Campaign Strategy meeting, 11am-5.30pm. St Francis Hall, Birmingham University. **021-632 6909**

BIRMINGHAM Socialist alternatives in Britain. Half day conference. Spkrs Tricia Davis, Geoff Edge, John Rees. 1-5pm, Star Club, 25 Essex St. Creche. Org Communist Party. **021-692 1765**

GLASGOW Labour Party's International Festival of Socialism. Michael Foot and spkrs from Chile, Nicaragua, W Europe. Rally 11am, discussion, entertainment pm, theatre 7.30pm. Org Scottish Council of Labour Party. **041-332 9946**

LONDON SE1 Policing by coercion. Conference on Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. Spkrs: Paul Boateng, Gareth Pierce, Darcus Howe, Paddy Hillyard. 9.30-5pm. County Hall. Creche, food/drink. Org GLC Police Committee **01-633 5944**

BELFAST Interim conference on 3rd All-Ireland Gay Conference. 10-4pm, Gay Centre, 4 University St. **0232-664111**

LONDON W1 Money and finance workshop. 11am, Alan Lipietz, French developments in marxian theory of money; 2.30 Robin Murray, Could municipal money cure London's recession? Architectural Assn, 10 Percy St. Org by CSE Money and Finance Group.

LONDON SE1 Labour Co-ordinating Committee AGM. Members only. 2pm, County Hall.

SUN 23 JAN

LONDON WC1 'Greenham Common — What can we do?' Film and talk for all wanting to act in support. 7.30 Drill Hall, Chenies St. Organised by Abolish Cruise and Trident. **01-450 0855**

LONDON WC1 The Structure of politics: the 'public sphere' and its transformation. Spkr Dave Joseph. 3pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. **01-242 8033**

MON 24 JAN

NOTTINGHAM Public launch of Nottingham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. Spkr Vron Ware. 7.30pm International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.

SUNBURY ON THAMES Labour's Alternative Economic Policy. Spkrs Brian Gould and Murray Rowlands. 7.45pm Sunbury County Secondary School, Nursery Rd. Org Spelthorne CLP, **16 Stanwell Rd, Ashford.**

WIMBLEDON Nuclear energy debate. Spkrs John Ashford versus Martin Ince. 8pm William Morris Hall, 267 The Broadway, London SW19. Org Wimbledon Labour Party.

TUES 25 JAN

BRIXTON Unemployment, racism and the crisis. Public forum. 7.30 Brixton Town Hall. Org S. London Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism!

STRATFORD EAST, London. 'Any Minute Now' Rock drama by Scottish Co, Wildcat. 25 Jan-12 Feb. **Box Office 01-534 0310**

WED 26 JAN

N. KENSINGTON Socialism and the anti-nuclear family. 7.30 Methodist Church, Lancaster Rd, London W11. Org W London Socialist Society.

LONDON SE1 Women and Social Work: open meeting of GLC Women's Committee working group. 7pm County Hall. **01-671 9051**

NOTTINGHAM Medical consequences of the bomb and Warplan UK. Spkrs Nick Armstrong, Duncan Campbell. 7.30 Friends Meeting House, Clarendon St. Org Nottingham CND.

ISLINGTON Prostitution in Islington. Meeting 8pm, Room 4, Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Org Islington Fabian Society. **01-609 4142**

STOKE NEWINGTON Socialist-feminist marching band: players sought, brass, wind, percussion. 7.30-9.30 Clissold Park School, Clissold Rd, London N16. **01-533 2428/7**

THUR 27 JAN

MANCHESTER The Left in the 1980s. Spkrs Stuart Hall, Beatrix Campbell. 7.30 Manchester Poly Students' Union, Sidney Building, Oxford Rd, Manchester 13. Org *Marxism Today* and North West CP.

LONDON NW3 Peace and the bomb: why Labour supports unilateral disarmament. Spkrs Fenner Brockway, Duncan Campbell, Rebecca Johnson, John McDonell. 8pm ASLEF Hall, 9 Arkwright Rd. Org Hampstead Labour Party.

ABERDEEN Trade Unions and Unemployment. Spkrs George Bolton (NUM), George Galloway, Pete Carter (People's March), Hugh Wyper (T&G) 7.30 Music Hall. Org Aberdeen Jobs for Youth Campaign.

LONDON NW5 'Peace and War in Fiction.' Fay Weldon, Marion Warner, Salman Rushdie read from their novels. 8.30pm Queen's Crescent Library, Kentish Town. Org St Pancras CND. **01-485 0686**

RICHMOND Violence against women. Meeting with Women Against Violence Against Women, Police Liaison Officer. 8pm 57 Church Road, Richmond. Org Richmond LP women's section

FORTHCOMING

28-30 JAN Bath Campaign skill-sharing weekend on non-violent direct action; public speaking, campaign against cruise. Org West Region CND. **0225 26948**

28 JAN Homerton Benefit for Troops Out Movement. Irish folk and African highlife music. Bar. 8.30pm Chat's Palace, Brooksby's Walk, London E9

London WC1 Josephine Butler — courage and compassion. Spkr Joyce Ansell. 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. Coffee 6.30pm. Org The Shaw Society

29 JAN London Second London Assembly. London organisations discuss London's economy and services. 10-1.30pm, Friends House, Euston Rd. Org GLC

London WC2 Festival of Cuban Culture. 130th anniversary of Jose Marti's birth. Film and talks, afternoon. Live Latin American group eve. Bar. Africa Centre, 38 King St, WC2. Org Britain-Cuba Resource Centre.

London W1 Keeping the Peace. Women's Peace Workshops. 10-6pm Polytechnic of Central London, 115 New Cavendish Street. Women only. Org The Women's Press

London W1 Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Aspects of Kleinian Theory. Janet Sayers and Ann Scott. The Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Road. Women only. **01-794 6063**

Manchester Greater Manchester and District CND Annual General Meeting. 10am Manchester Town Hall. **Peter Norman 061-445 2196**

London SE1. Racism and schools. Consultative conference. Spkr Farrukh Dhondy. Multiculturalism, teacher unions, mother-tongue teaching, Black teachers. 11-4.30 County Hall. Org Communist Party **01-251 4406**

Cambridge Work for the future: A jobs fair with a difference. Stalls, talks, advice, films etc on agriculture, co-ops, health, job-sharing, environment etc. Creche, access for disabled. 10-5pm Wesley Centre, King St. **Ann Robinson 0223 356454**

London SE1 Improving Council Housing Estates. Working conf on vandalism, neighbours, youth, decentralisation, tenants organisations. Poly of Southbank. Org by Safe Neighbourhoods Unit' **01-721 1388**

30 JAN Leeds Remember Bloody Sunday. Commemorative demonstration. Org Irish Freedom Movement **01-274 3951**

Birmingham West Midlands CND AGM. 2pm UCATT, Gough St

31 JAN Nottingham Picket for Khan and Kaur families, 10am DHSS Castle Boulevard. Org Nottingham CARF

Oxford Teach-in on new technology, the Oxford experience. Spkrs incl: Roger Sealey, Bernard Rowley, Bill Roche, Pat Phipps. 7.30pm Headington Labour Club, Windmill Road, Headington, Oxford. Org WEA. **Phil Fryer 0865 721277.**

3 FEB London WC2 Zoe Fairbairns reads from her new novel, *Stand We At Last* (Virago.) 7pm City Lit, Stukely St, Drury Lane

5-6 FEB London NW1. Socialist Society Annual Conference. Plenary sessions — NATO; Alternative to Thatcherism; Unemployment; Feminism, Socialism, Labourism. Members' AGM. Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London W1. **01-734 8501**

Glasgow Afghanistan: an eye-witness account. Ron Brown MP. 10.30 McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall St. Org Scottish Council of Liberation. **041-339 9390**

London SE1 Afro-Caribbean struggle against imperialism. Conference with Ken Gill, Hilda Bernstein, Cuban Ambassador, Fennis Augustine. 10.30 County Hall. Org Liberation and Britain-Cuba Resource Centre. **01-607 0485**

7 FEB London W1 A World Apart: The Culture of 19th Century Non-Conformity. Alun Howkins. 7.30pm Black Horse, Rathbone Place. Org History Workshop

11 FEB Wembley Charity Gala with Loose End, Classic Black, Safari Steel Band, Legba Dance Group. 7pm Brent Town Hall, Wembley. For Sickle Cell Society

12 FEB London WC1 Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value. Conf with Baroness Seear and Dipak Nandy. 2.30-6pm YWCA, Great Russell St. Org Fawcett Society **01-587 1287**

13 FEB London Benefit Concert, Shaftesbury Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue. Proceeds for adult education, Nicaragua. Org Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign **01-226 6747**

19 FEB Southampton Peace Festival. Workshops and evening entertainment. 10.30am onwards, Students' Union, Southampton University. Org Southampton CND

20-21 FEB Nottingham Women in Booktrades. Workshops and discussions for women in libraries, bookshops, printing, publishing, distribution. Creche. Contact Gill, **Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester**

26 FEB Oxford New thinking on employment. Conf on a new strategy for the Labour movement, Ruskin College, Oxford. Org SERA trade union working group. **01-439 3749**

Manchester Ban Plastic Bullets. Labour movement delegate conference; spkrs from Britain and Ireland. 11am UMIST, Barnes Wallis Building, Sackville Street. Contact Plastic Bullets Conference, **Box 15, 163/6 Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN**

11-13 MAR Malvern Election conference of Ecology Party Winter Gardens, Malvern. **Tony Jones 01-735 2485**

12 MAR London W1 First feminist bookfair and Women in Libraries' annual conference. PCL, 115 Cavendish St. Contact Sherry Jespersen, **01-636 2383**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your items to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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Theatres

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SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines). 24 hour instant booking 01-200 0200. Group sales 01-379 6061 CC. From 24 Jan. eves 7.30
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Meetings

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CULTURE and POLITICS
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Thursday evenings at 6.30 in the Library at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1.

27 January: *Dave Morly and Ken* Worple: Criticism is not Enough: The Politics of Cultural Production.

3 February: Tony Stone: Culture and Democracy.

10 February: John Jennings: Politics and the Control of the Media.

17 February: Stuart Weir: Football as a Working-Class Sport.

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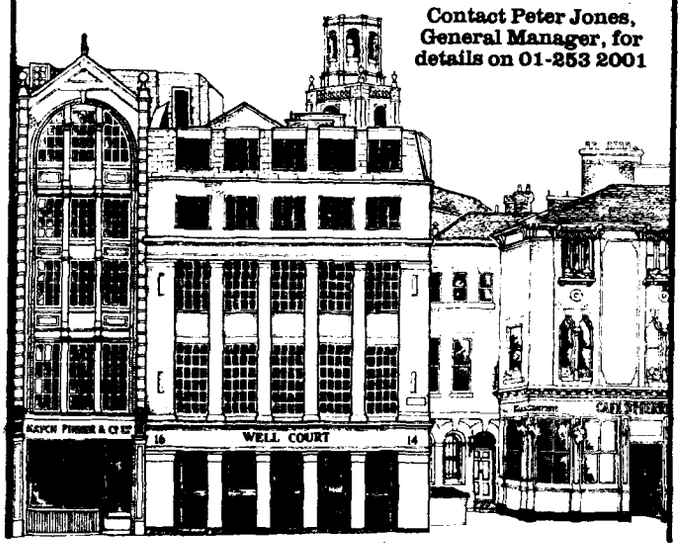

JAN. 25. Arab Club Lectures. Prof. S. Khulusi: 'Arab Impact on Western Civilisation'. 6.30 p.m. PCL, 309 Regent St, London W1.

SHAW SOCIETY. Friday 28 January, Joyce Ansell on 'Josephine Butler: Courage and Compassion'. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Lecture 7 p.m.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 23 Jan. 8 p.m. 'Psychic Laws & Phenomena'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

22 JAN.: SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES IN BRITAIN. Half-day conference organised by Communist Party, with Tricia Davis, Geoff Edge, John Rees. 1.00 till 5.00, Star Club, 25 Essex Street, Birmingham 5. Bar, creche. Details 021-692 1785.

Courses

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30 Jan.: 'THEOSOPHY & CHRISTIANITY – Leslie Price, founder/first editor 'The Christian Parapsychologist'.

Holidays/ Travel

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30 JULY-9 AUGUST:
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PRAGUE 30 April-2 May (for May Day) £55
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ATHENS 25 April-8 May (for May Day) £180
MOSCOW by train 28 May-7 June, 23 July-2 Aug. £180
KIEV by train 28 May-7 June, 23 July-2 Aug. £180
YUGOSLAV RIVIERA 15-27 June £145
LENINGRAD 2-14 July, 16-28 July £180
LENINGRAD and MURMANSK 13-25 Aug. £210
ROME, PISA, FLORENCE 27 Aug.-5 Sept. £150
IRKUTSK and LAKE BAIKAL 12 June-1 July £280

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